

THE WORLD'S UNREST:
VISIONS OF THE DAWN



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"PRESSING PROBLEMS OF THE CLOSING AGE"
"THE LORD COMETH" ETC.

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I

BEFORE THE TWO ADVENTS— A PARALLEL

A STRIKING parallel can be drawn between the world as it is now, at the approach of the Second Advent, and the world as it was at the approach of the First Advent. Then, as now, the times were distressful. Then, as now, wars and rumours of wars produced exhaustion and engendered fears.

Then, as now, democratic institutions, as understood at that period, were in practice breaking down, unable to cope with the extraordinary conditions of the time. Then, as now, many were looking for some strong man, some superman in whose hands they and their concerns should be safe. Then, as now, the Roman Empire was coming, and finally did come, into being. Then, as now, the misery and despair of some was discordantly accompanied by the hilarity and riotous living of others.

Then, as now, the realisation of human defencelessness against dangers existing in the visible and invisible realms was moving many to yearn for divine protection, and the consciousness of human sin was moving them to yearn for divine redemption. Then, as now, the religious sense

of many was confused, perplexed by a multiplicity of creeds and cults competing for their adherence. Then, as now, there was, on the part of some at least, the longing for a present, a visible God—for "God manifest in the flesh."

Then, as now, there were Jews—only now there are also Gentiles who cherish this hope—looking for the advent of Messiah. They believed the world's trials, present and prospective, to be the "pangs of Messiah," the signs that heralded the promised coming of Messiah. Then, that expectation of Messiah's coming was about to be literally and really fulfilled, so far as His predicted advent to suffer humiliation and death was concerned. Now, with the same literalness and reality, the expectation of Messiah's coming is about to be again fulfilled—this time, as regards His predicted advent with power and in great glory.

II

THE FUTURE

THE Future is the theme of this book. The past has been written of so amply ; whereas the future, despite its far greater concern to us, suffers an almost complete literary neglect. Not that the reading public lack interest in the future : on the contrary, no subject really interests them as much ! What is going to happen is a question that wells up from a very deep spring. It is a cosmic inquiry that mankind may most honourably make. The discovery of the great expanse of the future is a proper, a noble, employment of the human intelligence.

To be ignorant of the future, and know only the past and the present, means a very large measure of blindness. It is much like wearing blinkers straight in front of the eyes. But how, by what method, are we to discover the future ? That is simple. The Bible has disclosed the future. Let no one impatiently reject this idea without making attentive personal study of biblical prophecy in the light of present world-conditions. Many of us, who now accept prophecy as true, used to ignore it and almost to despise those who believed in its application to modern times. But the evidence is too strong, and we have changed our

mind. The case grows stronger, and one is daily more convinced, that, wonderful as it may seem, the long vista of the future is to be seen in the prophecies of the Bible. . . .

Hope is the keynote of these pages. How it is needed ! Despair has already invaded some of the finest minds and greatest hearts, because they know the world to be, humanly speaking, without hope. Disillusioned they are, once and for all. Looking into the very depths of the things of this present age, they have seen that which forbids them to believe that a mere revamping of the existing world-order will avail. They have discovered a flaw which, they know, cannot be healed by human hand.

The poignant words of a former British Prime Minister, Mr. Bonar Law, as transmitted to us by the present Prime Minister, will be remembered :

“ He told me that he felt that what he regarded as the hopeless situation of Europe weighed upon him day and night. He said that he could see no way through it.”

If, to those eyes, cleared by the known approach of death and departure from this world, the situation appeared hopeless then, it would appear still more hopeless now. Friction and fissure are at every turn—dissension in nations and among nations, with the prospect of worse to come. The present Prime Minister and others have warned us that another war would probably destroy the existing civilisation. Yet nothing is more likely than that another war will happen. Europe is seething with unrest, both civil and

international. The danger is not confined to Europe !

A Labour leader,¹ speaking of Asiatic migration and European and American opposition to it, of the ability of the Chinese and others to underlive the white man, has said :

“This must constitute a tremendous menace to the standard of life of other peoples, and may make for a world-wide conflagration. The potentialities of the situation are grave and even terrifying. There is required a greater wisdom than has been displayed by the statesmen of the world.”

No Labour statesman possesses the required wisdom, nor does any Conservative or Liberal statesman. No woman has that wisdom. It calls for superhuman, for divine wisdom. The Lord Jesus Christ must come back again to reign. He will. That is the Hope of the world and the only Hope. It is the promise of Prophecy.

We have had enough of the thin and brittle optimism which is used to veneer the dead wood of the world-order of this dispensation. Prophecy gives us to expect a brief apparent recovery, which many will hail as something new and lasting—as the Golden Age at last. But that has happened before. The institution of the Roman Empire brought such a hope, as a modern historian has reminded us, saying :

“Amid the distress of the pre-Christian centuries who shall say how far the wish was father to the

¹ Mr. C. T. Cramp, Industrial Secretary, National Union of Railwaymen.

thought? Men were craving for a *praesens deus*, a visible manifestation of deity, such an epiphany as should right the wrongs of the world, heal its bleeding wounds, and give social peace and serenity. Prayers and thanksgiving were directed to these incarnate benefactors as visible gods. In the year 48 B.C., the Asiatic cities set up an inscription to Julius Cæsar hailing him as 'God manifest and universal Saviour of human life.' Similarly, Augustus was recorded as 'ancestral God and Saviour of the whole human race,' whose name Ovid, in a prayer for grace, coupled with the gods with the significant words: 'than whom he is more tangible.' The Athenians, also, addressed Julius Cæsar as their Saviour and Benefactor."

The history of two millennia has shown that something more is needed than human leadership and human organisation to make this earth the Kingdom of God! It requires the personal return and the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One reason for the evils of this dispensation is that the world needs a controlling hand. "Terror seized upon the stoutest hearts," says Mahaffy, "when the news came that Alexander the Great was dead and the world without a master." The same terror stalks abroad to-day, for the world is without a master and never needed one more! But it must be the right One, for no human master can suffice.

As for the mirage of all humanity—all races, nations, peoples, classes, sections, individuals—wisely, righteously, peaceably, and permanently governing themselves, it is entirely dispelled by experience.

The religious and political unity of the human race is waiting for the return of Christ, when—

“All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s; and He is the governor among the nations.”¹

“All would give much to gain at least a clue to what is likely to happen.” Such are the very words used by the *Times* in a recent leading article. The clue to the future is given in the following pages. It is the clue provided by the Bible. No other clue exists. “In his *History of England*, published the other day, Mr. George Trevelyan tells us tantalisingly,” says the *Times* in the aforementioned editorial, “that the historian, for all his knowledge and study of the past, can see into the future no further than any one else. He can only point, like a showman, to what has already happened.”

God, through the prophets, has given in the Bible that clear vision of the future, denied to ordinary historians. History rightly “refrains to claim the powers of a guide to the future”;² but in prophecy, God does claim to reveal the things that are to come.

¹ Ps. xxii. 27, 28.

² *Times*.

III

WHAT IS PROPHESED

BIBLICAL prophecy has mirrored in advance our modern international politics and notably the revival of the ancient Roman Empire, which is the wonder of the present day. Having anticipated the main course of world-events through thousands of years, prophecy is now with especial distinctness being translated into history.

The main theme of prophecy is the visible, bodily appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ at His two Advents—the First Advent which is already past, the Second which, though imminent, is still future. That intellectual giant, Sir Isaac Newton, who was convinced of the truth of biblical prophecy, pointed out that the already fulfilled predictions of Christ's first coming were "few and obscure," whereas the predictions of His second coming are "many and clear." Therefore, as He came the first time, much more will He come the second time.

"There is scarce a prophecy in the Old Testament which doth not in something or other relate to His second coming."

says Newton, and though it may be possible to

amend or expand his scientific hypotheses, his scriptural certainty that the Lord Jesus Christ will return is more and more completely proved to be securely founded. For Newton lived at a time when little was actually happening to fulfil prophecy, whereas in our own time events are more clearly and literally significant of the Saviour's imminent return than the most faithful believers might have ventured to expect.

In surveying what is prophesied, we cannot do better than follow Sir Isaac Newton's advice :

"Amongst the old prophets, Daniel is easiest to be understood, and therefore in those things that relate to the last times, he must be made the key to the rest."

The great scientist took the view, both scientific and common-sensible, that Daniel lived and prophesied precisely as, and when, recorded in the Book of Daniel. He observes that Daniel was famous for his virtue and wisdom in the time of his brother-prophet Ezekiel, by whom he is most honourably mentioned,¹ and that his prophecies could not therefore have been written, as some have pretended, at or after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes !

Daniel in his capacity of *prophet* is expressly referred to in Ezekiel's satirical address to the King of Tyre : "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel ; there is no secret that they can hide from thee." Now, Daniel himself expressly claims to be, through the knowledge given to him by God,

¹ Ezek. xiv. 20, xxviii. 3.

a "*revealer of secrets*":¹ "there is a God in heaven," said he, "that revealeth secrets . . .," and the secret of Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation had, he declared, been revealed to him, that he might tell it to the King.

The fact is, that Daniel's very success as a prophet has been used against him. The fulfilment of his predictions has been so exact, that criticism has argued that he must have been wise after (and not before) the event, and that these predictions must be of later date than the historical events he foresaw. But, as we shall see, this very hour is witnessing the literal and continuous fulfilment of Daniel's prophecies, and no criticism will be so "high" as to say that the prophet is still alive, or that the Book of Daniel is a forgery of A.D. 1926!

The Jews, whose tenacity of fact as handed down from generation to generation was more dependable than any sceptical conjectures formed relatively late in the day, believed that Daniel was taken to Babylon in connection with the seventy years' captivity, and that he did in fact make the prophecies standing in his name. "Daniel was in the greatest credit among the Jews till the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian," Newton remarks. Josephus had not a doubt that the prophecies of Daniel were before the events predicted, for, he saw in conditions existing in his own time a certain fulfilment of these prophecies. The Lord Jesus Himself hall-marked these prophecies by His words, "as saith the Prophet Daniel," and by

¹ Dan. ii. 28 ff.

His own reiteration of the same predictions, including that of His own still future coming as the "Son of Man," of whom Daniel had prophesied.

As at a later time there was to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, so Daniel was the Prophet to the Gentiles. He may justly be called the first and greatest of historians, because he has given us a work of universal history, drawn from the unimpeachable source of divine inspiration and published not after but *before* the historic events recorded. History written before it has happened is most evidently superior to history written after it has happened. How pre-written history, how prophecy, is possible is treated in an ensuing chapter.

Daniel's prophetic history begins with the Kingdom of Babylon and ends with the Kingdom of Christ. It deals with the fall of Babylon, the successive rise and fall of three other great Empires, of which the last will be found existing on the eve of the return of Christ. He, at His coming, will put away this last of human Empires and establish His own glorious and perfect Empire throughout the whole earth.

The Times of the Gentiles is the biblical name for the historic period extending from Babylon's overthrow of the throne of David to the royal return of Christ. Daniel *saw* the beginning of the Times of the Gentiles. He *foresaw* the end of the Times of the Gentiles. It was to the end of that period that the Lord Jesus referred, when He announced that at the completion of the Times of the Gentiles certain remarkable signs and conditions will be manifest, and then He, the Son of

Man, will be seen "coming in the clouds with power and great glory."

That enormous Image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his famous dream was the epitome of the history of four great successive Gentile Empires wielding world-power. During the Times of the Gentiles, the period covered by Daniel's prophecy, there have been, and will be, four and only four predominant world-Powers. Kaiser Wilhelm tried to introduce a fifth, and failed.

"Now, in the vision of the Image composed of four metals, the foundation of all Daniel's Prophecies is laid," says Sir Isaac Newton, and he continues: "It represents a body of four great nations which should reign over the earth successively—namely, the People of Babylonia, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. And by a Stone, cut out without hands, which fell upon the feet of the Image and brake all the four metals to pieces and became a great mountain and filled the whole earth, it further represents that a new Kingdom should arise after the four and conquer all those nations and grow very great and last to the end of all Ages."

The naming of the second and third Empires prefigured in the Image was made possible by a later vision given directly to Daniel himself. It was an extraordinary prophetic achievement which has dealt scepticism a blow it must parry or surrender to. Hence the sceptic's contention that Daniel's prophecies were made after, and not before, the Medo-Persian and the Greek Empires came into being.

“The ram which thou sawest that had the two horns: they are the Kings of Media and Persia.” This was the interpretation of his vision which the heavenly messenger gave him.

“And the rough he-goat is the King of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first King.” The prophecy of Alexander the Great, of his Empire and its fate after his death, is truly marvellous. It suffices here to quote this one sentence: “Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four Kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power.”¹ There was the history of Alexander’s Empire in a nutshell—written before it had happened or was thought of, except by God, who sees the end from the beginning and on occasion makes it known through His servants the prophets.

But no wonder scepticism racks its brains for some other explanation of the prophecies of Daniel, for all the time he is predicting things more important by far than the history of any human monarchy. He is predicting the monarchy of Christ Jesus, to be instituted when He returns. Daniel foresees Him as the Stone cut without hands that shall demolish human systems of rule and become a great mountain filling the whole earth.² Or again this prophet foresees Him as the Son of Man to whom is given dominion and glory and a Kingdom that all people, nations, and languages shall serve Him. And whereas all merely human dominion shall pass away and all merely human kingdoms shall be destroyed, the

¹ Dan. viii. 1–22.

² *Ibid.* ii. 35, 44, 45.

dominion and the Kingdom of Him who is at once Son of God and Son of Man shall never be destroyed, shall never pass away.¹

Now for the fourth Empire—not named but described! It is the Roman Empire, and throughout the Christian era has been recognised as such. Daniel shows this fourth and Roman Empire existing at the time when human dominion is to be consumed by the dominion of Christ. The name of the Empire had, until the other day, passed out of common speech. Now it is again in the news.

The Roman Empire as a political and international fact had long been in total eclipse. Five continents are now watching the passing of this eclipse, as the shadow of history moving over and away from the face of the ancient Empire is letting it gradually, yet swiftly, reappear, soon to be even more conspicuous to human sight than it was in the time of its ancient renown and power.

How strangely its character and history were foreknown to the prophet! Its iron rule, its power to break and to subdue. Then its duality, being of Eastern and Western elements, as typified by the two legs and shown in its history, to the very point of the scission of East and West. Then the division into individual kingdoms, where once there had been unification, as fore-indicated by the ten toes of the Image, and eventually realised in historic fact. Again, the mixing of iron with clay which cleave not together, as we see to-day, as regards the extremes of Red and Black, Bol-

¹ Dan. vii. 9-14.

shevism and Fascism. How that foreshows the seed of dissentience, whose development the iron rule (forenamed by Daniel) may prevent for the time being, and yet is a seed of destruction, a germ of mortality, in every merely human dominion that ever was or could be. Difference of race and nation, difference of economic and other interest, may be repressed, but cannot be eliminated, by mere humanity, at its wisest or even its strongest.

Meanwhile, however, neither racial division nor national subdivision, nor the repugnance of iron and clay, are preventing, nor will they prevent, the revival of the Roman Empire. It will soon be considered as the world's last human hope. But what the world needs is the divine hope, the promised Kingdom, personal and direct, of the Lord Jesus Christ. This very revival of the Roman Empire, which is now in progress, is the sign that the Kingdom of Christ is soon to follow. The revival of the last of the Gentile Empires portends the end of the Times of the Gentiles and the beginning of the Times of Christ. He will cut short its career and substitute something infinitely better. Even if He should not, what does history bid us to expect as the ultimate end of even the most intelligent and the strongest, the ironest human régime? The world, the flesh, and the devil are too much for any humanly directed world-order, however well it may begin.

There are, in Daniel's prophetic account of the last years of this Age, references to conflict within the Empire, indicative of strife breaking out where all should theoretically be peace. The several

prophets concur in telling of great tribulation as preceding the return of the Lord Jesus and the peace and safety of His Millennial Reign. Prophecy speaks, too, of resistance to God the Father, and the Son, culminating at last in violent revolt which will be quelled only at the powerful, visible appearing of the Son.¹

There is, we must recognise, one predicted to arise who will be the head and front of this offending. He will be the final ruler of the final human Empire, in its final stage. He is to achieve fame and power *after* the heads of the other nations who will form the reconstituted Roman Empire, and yet to become the chief of them all, the Arch-dictator among the dictators who will rule the various confederate nations of the Empire. Who he is to be, cannot yet be known. Some interpreters have expected him to arise in the Western part of the Empire, some have expected him to arise in the Eastern part. This is a matter which coming events will elucidate.

This personage will make a Covenant with the Jews for a term of seven years—and that precise term is important—regulating their status and their rights, political and religious. According to prediction he will openly repudiate Christianity and will establish the cult of himself, claiming to be worshipped as, and more than, were the emperors of antiquity. For this and other reasons he will not only set himself against all who declare their faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified and coming, but even the Covenant with the Jews, more

¹ Ps. ii. ; Rev. xvii. 14, xix. 19.

especially as touching their religious worship, will become irksome to him. Therefore he, the then-head of the people that already have "destroyed the city and the sanctuary,"¹ as Daniel predicted they would, will enter into conflict with Jerusalem at the close of the Times of the Gentiles.

It is a dark picture that is painted by the Old Testament prophets, by the Lord Jesus Himself, and by the Apostles, when they speak of the last few years of this Age. But that darkest hour will precede the Dawn wherein the Dayspring from on High shall revisit this earth in its sin and its distress.

What more says Daniel the Prophet of this? He foretells that when human failure and rebellion and despair, repeated throughout years by the thousand, have reached the climax, then transgression will be finished, then will be made an end of sins, then reconciliation for iniquity and everlasting righteousness, will be brought in. Because Messiah who was "cut off, not for Himself" but "for our transgressions" that He may "make His soul an offering for sin,"² is to return as the Righteousness of God to set up a Kingdom, an Empire, which shall stand for ever.³

¹ Dan. ix. 24, 26.

² Isa. liii.

³ Dan. ii. 44.

IV

THE PAST TWO YEARS

TWO years ago this pen was, as now, writing a book on the world's future, seen in the light of prophecy.¹ Even in that brief period of two years, certain anticipations set forth in that earlier book have been most remarkably confirmed.

Not that any personal prescience is claimed, nor the receipt of individual vision or revelation. Anybody can know as much of the future who candidly studies biblical prophecy. A great many do study it, and are saying the same things. No new revelations and visions of the future are needed. We have already enough. Since Patmos, the revelation of things future is complete. There remains only for us to understand it, and for events to accomplish it.

The imminent revival of the Roman Empire was one of the anticipations of two years ago. Unmistakable progress has recently been made to that end. This Roman antiquity is now the latest political cry. It is the great political novelty of the hour. So modern has this ancient prediction become, that the revived Roman

¹ *Pressing Problems of the Closing Age.*

Empire is about to be the dominant factor in international affairs. Of this more presently.

The spread of dictatorship, as superseding democratic government, is another anticipation which has been noticeably upheld by recent events. Dictatorship as a mode of government is clearly indicated in prophecy to be characteristic of the closing years of this Age. It is there shown as culminating in the dictatorship of a final Cæsar of the revived Roman Empire, this super-dictator being at the apex of the system, while lesser dictators, each supreme in his own domain, are beneath. That dictatorial government has spread of late, goes without saying.

The Jews have, as also anticipated, continued to make Palestine their own by a steady ingress of population, by the development of education, agriculture, industry, housing, and so on, and by the contribution of money flowing in from the dispersed Jews. Some critics may think that achievement has been smaller than it might conceivably have been, but there are Jews who think that progress would have been greater save for restrictions imposed by others. One may venture to say that more is happening than appears on the surface, especially politically, and that an important development concerning Palestine and the Jews will be heard of before long.

The continuance of European unrest and the disappointment of human plans for appeasing it, was another anticipation, only too closely verified by the latest League of Nations developments.

Convulsions of nature have continued, as ex-

pected, and though they have mercifully been kept within bounds, they have had a place among the signs and warnings to which we are bidden to give heed.

These various matters will have fuller treatment in the ensuing pages.

PART I
THE RESTORED ROMAN EMPIRE



V

THE NEW ROMAN EMPIRE

THE new, or rather the renewed, Roman Empire suddenly took more central and definite place in the public mind of Europe when a London newspaper, under the heading "Italy as an Empire," published the following :

"The *Sunday Times* understands that it is the intention of Signor Mussolini and the Italian Government, in full agreement with the Italian Crown, to proclaim Italy an Empire in the course of the coming year. . . . The proclamation of such an Empire could not but react powerfully upon the psychology of the Italian people and upon the European outlook. A new era may well be heralded by such an event, the creation of a new Empire following upon the demise of the older German, Russian, Austrian, and Ottoman Empires."

Europe saw at once what an Italian Empire must infallibly mean. The Paris *Temps* in a leading article said that—

"An Italian Empire could mean nothing but a renewal, in some form yet to be devised, of the *Ancient Roman Empire*, with absolute mastery in the Mediterranean as a base."

Another French newspaper headed a reproduc-

tion of the *Sunday Times* paragraph with these words, in large letters :

“L'EMPIRE ROMAIN, VA-T-IL RENAÎTRE ?”

Is the Roman Empire going to be reborn ? Most certainly it is. At the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus, the Roman Empire will be in existence as surely as it was at His First Advent. The Italian Premier was quick to confirm the report that he intends Italy to have imperial status and power. He spoke to one interviewer, of an Empire as “a form of government and more especially that marvellous State organisation which in the earlier centuries of the Christian Era dominated the world from Rome.”

The revival of the Roman Empire is passing through various stages. First, the Roman tradition had to be revived in Italy, and the Italian people united and inspired to pursue the imperial aim. This has been triumphantly accomplished. As the Duce has himself expressed it :

“The battle in the interior has been won : and Italy takes the initiative in the world !”

Royal approval has been expressed through the heir to the throne, Prince Umberto, who in a published interview has declared his sympathy with propaganda to rouse an imperial consciousness in Italy. From all classes comes enthusiastic support.

To associate with Italy the other nations that formerly belonged to the Roman Empire—that is the second operation. We see this in process : Spain and Italy are in close relation. A very im-

portant fact is that the Balkan nations concerned are drawing ever closer to Italy. Even the differences between Italy and the Southern Slavs which were painfully evident during the war are now peacefully composed. A sense of common interest, or common danger, and really brilliant diplomacy, have brought into being an agreement between Italy and Jugo-Slavia, settling the questions at issue between them and establishing a common policy.

Græco-Italian relations have not been neglected, and their harmonious nature has been officially emphasised. The adherence of Greece is historically necessary to the Roman imperial unity. Every land which belonged to that Empire will be brought back into it, and, in addition, it seems likely to be buttressed by friendly relations with some other nations. Overtures have been made by Italy to France and also to Great Britain, for they, too, are needed to make the Roman Empire complete. Later chapters in this work are devoted to the position of these two Powers in relation to the revived Empire.

While other plans, which are successively proving abortive, are promoted in other quarters, Signor Mussolini, as a foreign correspondent of the *Times* has expressed it, "is taking the lead in what may be a new combination in European politics." He is reconstructing the ancient Roman imperial group. While the Geneva crisis was developing in March, the *Times* correspondent at Geneva pointed to his activities, and the *Times*, in a leading article, commented on them thus :

"While these grave matters are in suspense, it is necessary to call attention to other important international developments which have Southern and Central Europe as their scene. Signor Mussolini, who is a party to the Locarno Treaty, has recently taken the initiative in promoting other political combinations."

"Amid these floating mists," said the *Times*, "it is not easy to discern any clear outlines." But to students of Prophecy the outlines are clear as clear can be. They are the outlines of the reviving Roman Empire! "It is at any rate obvious," the *Times* went on to say, "that Signor Mussolini sets great store on retaining his initiative, and directing the new movement in accordance with his own plans," adding, further, that Signor Mussolini's influence is of great importance in "the designs for a new grouping of powers in Central Europe and in the Mediterranean."

Its ancient primacy among the seas is about to be regained by the Mediterranean. After the Mediterranean era came the Atlantic era, to be followed, as some have predicted, by the era of the Pacific. But the Mediterranean has suddenly reasserted itself, and once more, as of old, assumes the leading position, as queen of seas. Now that the Middle Sea is entering upon its second momentous career, Hegel's reference to it in his *Philosophy of History* is perhaps worth recalling:

"The Mediterranean Sea is the centre of world history. Greece lies here, the focus of light in history. Then in Syria we have Jerusalem, the centre of Judaism and Christianity. South-east of it lie Mecca and Medina, the centre of the

Mussulman faith; toward the west, Delphé and Athens; further west still, Rome. On the Mediterranean Sea we have also Alexandria and Carthage. The Mediterranean is thus the heart of the Old World, for it is that which conditioned and vitalised it. Without it, the history of the world could not be conceived; it would be like ancient Rome, or Athens, without the Forum where all the life of the city came together. The extensive tract of Eastern Asia is severed from the process of general historical development, and has no share in it; so also Northern Europe, which took part in the world's history only at a later date, and had no part in it while the Old World lasted. For this was exclusively limited to the countries lying round the Mediterranean Sea. Julius Cæsar's crossing the Alps—the conquest of Gaul, and the relation into which the Germans thereby entered with the Roman Empire—marks consequently an epoch in history; for in virtue of this, that Empire begins to extend its boundaries beyond the Alps. Eastern Asia and that Trans-Alpine country are the extremes of this agitated focus of human life around the Mediterranean, the beginning and end of history, its rise and decline."

There are certain factors making for the reunion of the Roman Empire. They include the following:

1. The apprehension of an oriental rising against the occident, which finds expression in current literature, in the sayings of some public men, and in many a private conversation. The prestige and the might of the revived Roman Empire would be a protective bulwark, it is thought.

2. The suspicion that, sooner or later, Germany will take measures to undo the results of the late war.

3. The conviction that for Austria to be joined to Germany would be a menace to neighbouring lands.

4. Bolshevist world-activity regarded, since the Russo-German Treaty, as a menace even greater.

5. The financial and economic difficulties consequent upon the war, which, it is thought, might find their solution in a union bringing strength in this as in other domains.

6. A certain fear felt by the Latin nations of some sort of Anglo-Saxon domination, or more definitely of an American domination.

American observers have drawn attention to this fear. Mr. Frank Simonds has written of the estrangement likely to come of the heavy war-debt payments made, and for long years to be made, by the Allies to their Associate. Another American writer has gone so far as to say: "Under the growing dominion of the fear of the Anglo-Saxon, even the South American republics have abandoned the United States and turned to the monarchical countries of Europe. The place we should have held in their thinking is now held by Spain and Italy." It does, indeed, seem likely that part of the prophesied world-might of the revived Roman Empire will be due to the sympathy and support of racially related South America. The same writer quotes *La Vie Latine* as saying:

"The form and the number of the three giants of the North (Anglo-Saxon, Slav, and German) speak loudly enough to drive the Latin everywhere, between the basin of the Mediterranean and the plains of South America, to look instinctively behind him for points of support."

But neither Great Britain nor North America is to be so summarily disposed of, as outside the Latin Union. The ancient British connection with the Roman Empire has to be remembered. The cultural contact with Græco-Latin civilisation has been close and prolonged. Modern Britain is a Mediterranean Power, and shows no desire to cease to be one. Hence there is solid ground for the expectation that Britain will enter the Roman company of nations which Italy is in the act of reviving. North America, too, has many blood ties with the Roman peoples. In the United States the Italian element alone, without speaking of the Jugo-Slavs, Greeks, and others, is a large and growing one. The historical connection with Western Europe, and with Great Britain in particular, is very close. As in the war, the United States will not be divided in sympathy from the Latin group in Europe. These things are not always of deliberate choice and purpose, but they come to pass as by some irresistible and incalculable force of destiny. In Canada there are strong links of history and of race with the Latin peoples, and the racial link is strengthened by the large French-Canadian population. Various auxiliary sympathies and aids, and some benevolent neutralities the world over, will presumably be added to the inherent strength of those peoples who form the new Roman Empire, and will contribute to make that Empire, in its day, the supreme power on the earth.

American interest in the reviving Empire is already intense and, it would seem, not without

admiration. As onlookers, Americans see more than some in Europe who are more closely involved. They see the historic meaning of this marvellous resurgence of the Roman Empire. One among them has written: "Despite the barbarian invasions, the work of Rome was an enduring work. It is the basis of the strongest cohesions to be found in the world to-day."

Americans clearly recognise the revived Roman Empire as a more and more substantial fact. Reporting this year's celebration of the 2679th anniversary of Rome's birthday, the *New York Times* correspondent wrote that:

"The Italian people are imbued with faith in the twentieth-century resurrection of the power and glory which were Rome's when she was mistress of a large part of the globe. . . . For the first time since the hordes of northern invaders crushed its world-power, well over a thousand years ago, Rome celebrated its birthday to-day as the capital of a 'modern Roman Empire.'"

To think that two and a half thousand years ago, before even the thought of the Roman Empire had entered into human mind, God, in the Bible, speaking through the prophet, depicted that Empire in being at this Age-end! For centuries Daniel's prophecy has been so interpreted, and as current developments prove, it was interpreted correctly. Thus the authority of the Bible is established in most impressive manner, in the sight of the people of to-day.

VI

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND FRANCE

LATIN fraternity has long and often been the theme of French pens. A society known as the Latin Union has existed for some time, as also has the periodical *La Vie Latine*. Then there is the Congress of the Latin Press, which has met three or four times, being attended by representatives of the greatest newspapers of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Rumania, and Latin America. A moving spirit in the institution of this Congress held that the Latin nations ought to employ every means "to draw closer together, to know each other better, to like each other a little better—indeed, to love one another."

The third meeting of this Conference was held in Rome, and among the questions were the fuller reporting by the Press of each Latin country of the doings and interests of the rest, the importance of the Latin cinematograph, the more general display of films produced in Latin lands. Exchange professorships and other means of promoting Latin Unity were also discussed. Signor Mussolini, who received the members of the Conference, "received them with extreme sympathy."

In various manners, the Latin reunion, to be

completed and cemented in the Roman Empire, has been preparing ; although it is only now that the final political means to reconstituting the Empire are being initiated. Whatever friction may ever have existed between their respective governments concerning rival national interests at this or that time, there has always been a distinct community of ideas between the peoples of the Græco-Roman world. They have a common civilisation and are formed in a common mould. So effectively did the Roman Empire weld them together, that they bear the same "family traits" to this day. They think in the same terms and react in the same manner. To outsiders this "family likeness" between the Græco-Latins of various nations is perhaps even more evident than to themselves.

But now comes the very concrete, definite, political proposal of Italy to France to enter into a Franco-Italian *bloc* of 80 millions of people, and thus to be part of the renewed Roman Empire. Mussolini has publicly made his overture to France. He has, through an interview in *L'Eclair* last January, publicly dispatched this invitation to her :

"France and Italy, with 80 million inhabitants between them, must walk hand in hand as sisters affectionately united."

A new Roman conquest of Gaul ! A conquest of affection. Like a second Julius Cæsar, the Italian Premier thus sets out to win Gaul for Rome, but by gentleness, not by violence—by an appeal to their union under the Roman Standard

in former times. His appeal for Franco-Italian union is supported by this argument: "It is in their evident interest. In order to form a solid *bloc* against the other *bloc*, which the European peoples, who hate us and lie in wait for us, dream of forming some day or other, we must be united, always, always. United, we are strong, and, at the present day, it is a crime not to be strong."

One month later, the appeal was renewed in an interview appearing in *Le Petit Parisien*, in which Signor Mussolini, having rehearsed the dangers that he considers threaten France and Italy alike, said :

"The common peril ought continually to draw the two countries closer together. Since their interests are identical, no serious question divides them, and both desire and need peace."

He then expounded his policy of the equilibrium of racial masses, saying :

"This peace France and Italy can impose by their union, which nothing must ever be allowed to disturb. They can impose peace, because they represent 80 million souls, just as many as the Germanic *bloc*. That is what I call the equilibrium of masses. If we maintain this equilibrium, peace will not be broken. There are in Europe three masses, corresponding to three different races, which counterbalance each other: the Western mass of the Latins, the Germanic mass, and the Slav mass, these two last-named masses separated by Poland. If the first-named, the Latin mass, disintegrates and disunites, equilibrium will disappear . . . !"

Only when this equilibrium has been maintained for several years will Europe be really pacified, is his view. Signor Mussolini doubtless considers that the Russo-German treaty tends to produce the Union of the Germanic and Slav masses, and creates a new peril for Poland as the separating nation. Presumably, he regards it as another and an urgent reason for the union and consolidation of the Latin mass.

His Chief's call to France was repeated by Count Volpi, Italian Minister of Finance, who conducted the war debt negotiations at Washington. At an American luncheon in Paris, at which he was guest, Count Volpi took occasion, in the course of his speech, to say :

"France ! Italy ! as private man or public man, as simple citizen or minister in office, I have only one manner of thinking or speaking : I love France ! And upon one thing we are all agreed ; it is that we are 80 millions of people, French and Italian, who ought to walk hand in hand in order to write the destiny of Europe."

One looked intently for the French response that this Italian appeal would wake. At first there was silence. France, not possessing a Mussolini, and being indeed in a more than usually embarrassed political position, there was no voice which could rapidly and authoritatively answer the Italian invitation, either with a No or a Yes. So it remained for French opinion to express itself gradually and unofficially, through various channels.

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Slowly but surely a *Yes* was defining itself in France. It was the inevitable! "On the horizon is seen the dawn-light of the rising Impero" was one French expression of the fact. If the Roman Empire is to be, then France must be in it or out of it. And to be out of it will be deemed not safe, not possible! France's rôle in Europe and beyond, has, during a long period of history, been so important, so pre-eminent, that acceptance of the Italian suggestion seemed to some Frenchmen almost like abdication, like the final renunciation of independent greatness. But facts are facts. In the modern world, with its complexities and perils, France, like many another nation, cannot any longer stand alone. And not only the exigencies of the present, but the call of the past and the pressure of destiny, appear to many French, as to Italian minds, to be insisting upon Latin reunion.

Fear of Germany impels in that direction, and when the Italian Premier uttered his bold challenge to Germany, new and decisive impetus was given to the French movement towards union with Italy. The day of Signor Mussolini's speech on Germany was hailed by a prominent French publicist as "A great day for Latinity." Franco-Italian union will come. Although at the close of 1925 a leading French newspaper had treated rather jocosely the plan "to create by the association of France and Italy a Roman Empire extending from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean," the events of 1926 have made many French converts to this plan. When once it strikes the mass-imagination of the French,

when once they translate this very practical policy of a revived Roman Empire into the language of political idealism, the Roman Empire "will go like anything" so far as the public opinion of France is concerned. There are certain reluctances to be overcome, certain difficulties to be adjusted, and then full rein will be given to public enthusiasm for the old-new Roman Empire.

Among the first signs of French interest in the Italian overtures were the restrained but meaningful words of that prominent French publicist, "Pertinax." Regretfully he wrote, in connection with the Italo-Jugoslav negotiations, of the great rôle held by France in Central Europe since 1919, but falling now to Italy. But, he said, since governmental follies in France have weakened France in international concerns, "nothing remains for us to do but to enter into an understanding with our Italian successor. Italy is from our point of view accomplishing a necessary task—a task in which sooner or later we shall join her." Returning to this subject after the Russo-German treaty was signed, "Pertinax" observed, "It seems that useful conversations could be begun between Rome and Paris."

Those in France who argue that the recommencement of the German Mittel-Europa and the *Drang nach Osten* is to be feared, think that present Italian policy in the Balkans is preventive of this. Again, the French financial problem alone is enough, if not solved otherwise—and such solution is not, at the moment of this writing, applied—to make France seek the improvement in

her credit which would necessarily follow upon the proposed association with Italy, from inclusion in the Roman Empire. Here and there, there are signs and tokens of the increasing favour with which Italy's invitation is viewed in France. Everywhere in the exigencies of her home and foreign situation are to be seen reasons which France will consider, impel, and compel her to form part, with Italy, of the Roman Empire in its revival.

Belgium, for the same reason as France, and by the same historic link, will be drawn into the imperial circle. So will Portugal, another national fragment of the imperial whole. One of Portugal's writers has said in praise of the Latinity which unites the peoples of the Empire :

“ Latin civilisation is not a privilege of the Latin race, which it carries with it as a river runs between its banks. It is a power within the race, that has founded it, that has defended it, and has given for it precious blood. The sweet and clear civilisation from the Mediterranean has given to art its feeling for harmony and proportion, to the spirit of man the love of liberty and light, to life the exalted emotions of beauty, to the peoples of earth the juridical conception of democracy. Other races might perhaps be regarded as superior in a talent for analysis or the sense of individual concurrence. But all that can appeal to man in the grace of moral order, in the spiritual joy of life, in liberty of conscience, in the spirit of moderation in politics as in philosophy, in the development of the grandeur of the human spirit, in a feeling for nature, in poetry as in science—all these are the glory of the Latin tradition.”

The Latin nations, by necessity, but also by choice, will reunite. A Franco-Italian alliance, as part of, or preparatory to, a general reunion of the Latin peoples, is a possibility of the near future.

Broader and deeper and swifter will the current become that carries these nations into the Empire, in whose revival they will hope and rejoice, as so many hoped and rejoiced at its beginning two thousand years ago. If human institutions could avail, this one might. Human experience of the past, and divine prophecy of the future concur to witness that only the Kingdom of the returning Christ Jesus can avail.

VII

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND GREAT BRITAIN

ITALY desires Britain as a partner in the Roman Empire, and overtures to Britain have been made as well as to France.

The historic link is there. The Prime Minister, Mr. Stanley Baldwin, in his famous speech to the Classical Association, pointedly reminded his hearers that this country once formed part of the Roman Empire :

“ To be an Englishman, native of a country which was an integral part of the Roman Empire for a period as long as from the Reformation until this present night, and to be ignorant of the history of that Empire is to be without that sense of perspective, in viewing both the change of events and their day-to-day reactions, which is essential to see our national life and to see it whole. . . . It was not for nothing that Western Europe was forged on the anvil of Rome, and who can say how much we owe to those long years of Roman law, Roman discipline, Roman faith and partnership in a common Empire ? During the first four centuries of the present era, Roman thought and Roman manners imposed themselves upon our island and made themselves a home here.

“ It may well be that subconscious memories of those days, and the mingling of blood for four

centuries, played their part no less than the arrival of the Normans in modifying certain characteristics of our Teuton invaders, and saved us from becoming what Carlyle calls 'a gluttonous race of Jutes and Angles, capable of no grand combinations, lumbering about in pot-bellied equanimity; not dreaming of heroic toil and silence and endurance, such as leads to the higher places of this universe and the golden mountain-tops where dwell the Spirits of the Dawn.' "

Lately there has been a large crop of archæological reminders that once we were part of the Roman Empire. Roman remains are being unearthed and sometimes in unlikely places, with a frequency and a richness which really might seem more than accidental! This phenomenon almost assumes the character of a "sign of the times," a portent that the Roman Empire is reviving, and that its sequel, the Empire of the Lord Jesus Christ, is soon destined to succeed it. Humanly speaking, there may be much to be said for the revival of the Roman Empire, and the equilibrium of racial masses as proposed by Signor Mussolini. For eight whole years the rival plan has been tried with repeated failure. The nations in general will not hold together, will not pull together—will not even join together. The League of Nations is based on this policy of all nations uniting, without discrimination in one organisation, one great *bloc*. It is a policy which, somehow, does not succeed.

The United States and Russia refuse to join the League of Nations. Germany has not joined it yet. Perhaps she never will. If she does, there

is that alliance which ties her to Russia, a non-member of the League of Nations, whose contempt for, and hostility to, that League is not disguised. Therefore Germany, if she does join, will not be a normal member of the League on account of her bond with Russia. The all-inclusive combining of the nations is impossible, judged by the experience of the past seven years. No more than oil and water, it seems, will certain nations consent to blend. Separation persists. There is, on the other hand, a tendency to unite where certain nations are concerned, whether this affinity be innate in them, or the result of their ancient and long-lasting companionship in Roman imperial times. This affinity it is now sought to utilise for the formation of a union of nations, which, though partial, because not including all nations, will be at least coherent.

The present League of Nations will either be transmuted into the inevitable Union of the Roman Nations, or, as seems rather more likely at this moment, a new and distinct Roman Union initiated by Italy will arise in its stead, or side by side with it. This new Roman Union will, of course, have a power which the present League of Nations would hardly claim. Humanly speaking, we may say again, this idea of a modern Roman Empire has much to recommend it, as, for the matter of that, had the Roman Empire in its original being. But the seed of evil in all the plans and performances of "this present evil age," as the Bible calls it, obstinately brings forth its evil fruit. Therefore, even the union for peaceful

ends of the most progressive and civilised nations of Europe, those which are the heirs and perpetuators of all that is finest in human culture, the nations which form the major part of Christendom—even this will disappoint, even this will, as it goes its way, illustrate the necessity of the visible reappearing and the righteous rule of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Not only the historic and legal connection of Great Britain with the Roman Empire, but also the traditional sympathy, enduring to this day between Britain and Italy, will tend towards the entrance, and towards British participation in the Roman Empire. British Mediterranean interests also move the country in that direction. We are a Mediterranean Power. We hold Gibraltar at the Mediterranean Gate, we have territorial responsibilities on its southern shore; the pathway to India is involved. . . .

Italy's policy of a renewed Roman Empire is a Mediterranean policy. It means treating the Mediterranean and its shores as the common interest, and, in a sense not yet precisely defined, the common property of the Mediterranean peoples. Thus it raises in acute and urgent form the question of where Britain stands in relation to the Roman Empire.

One of the English reviews, some time ago, contained an article headed "A Latin Union," whose theme was the necessity for France of a Latin Union. After saying :

"La belle France is done for, unless she is dealt better cards; to drop metaphor, unless she

can find a union powerful enough to give Germany pause. Otherwise Latin civilisation is doomed, and Europe is Teutonised”;

the writer's argument proceeded on the assumption that this country would have no concern or interest in this Latin or Roman Union which to France he considered vital. But perhaps he had not fully considered the Mediterranean implications, both territorial and maritime, of the Roman imperial arrangements now developing. Britain, when the Empire is definitely in operation, may find that in the matter of her interests there is need for the assent and co-operation of her Mediterranean neighbours.

Meanwhile there is visible a friendly Italian approach to Britain. Signor Mussolini, in an interview published in the *Morning Post*, has urged “closer collaboration between England and Italy,” saying :

“In my opinion Italy and England are impelled by nature, by disposition, by history, by tradition, and by interests, to a stricter and more sympathetic concord and collaboration. . . . Since the conquest of Gibraltar has made the British Empire a Mediterranean Power, her future remains always more closely bound to that of Italy.”

Following this appeal by the Italian leader, came these words :

“I cannot end this statement without recalling the beautiful words that your Premier spoke a few days ago in an address as President of the Classical Association, paying homage to the work of civilisation in Ancient Britain effected by

Roman laws and discipline; to 'pietas' and 'gravitas'; to the innate patriotism which were the foundations of the great civilisation that spread out from the Eternal City. As your illustrious Premier observed, the Western European nations preserve in different measure the language, laws, and traditions of Rome, and all owe their first lesson in civilisation to the same Alma Mater. Between Italy, who is now with tenacious will and severe discipline striving to educate once more her sons in the virtues that made Rome great, and England, who has forged a wonderful Empire on the anvil of Rome, and has powerfully contributed to the diffusion of civilisation in the world, there can only be deep, sincere, and heartfelt friendship."

That is the case as it will be stated when the decisive hour is reached, and the Yes or No comes to be spoken, concerning the re-entrance of this country into the Roman Empire.

VIII

THE ROMAN EMPIRE OUTSIDE EUROPE

THE next step toward the reorganisation of the ancient Empire is represented by the Duce's public claim that Italy shall have a larger share in the imperial heritage. While saying that "nobody in the world, above all, nobody in France, ought to be uneasy because of this beautiful dream of an Empire" that he loves, and while disclaiming any designs upon the French territories of Nice, Savoy, and Corsica, he has said to France: "You have so much money for exchange, so much to bargain with. From Tunis to the Near East we have many subjects for discussion. Does Syria interest you so much that you could not recognise our commercial preponderance in Asia Minor and as far as the distant ports of the Black Sea? Let us then discuss matters since we can discuss them as friends." The Duce on another occasion alluded to the facility of a Franco-Italian understanding in North Africa.

His contention has been that Italy was wrongfully treated at the close of the war by being denied any new Colony or any Mandate, while others were allotting these good things to themselves, and he has claimed a reversal of what he considers an injustice, especially as regards the

Mediterranean regions forming part of the Roman Imperial Domain.

Some perturbation was displayed in France when these suggestions and claims were first expressed. One Paris newspaper asked :

"Toward what ideal will the Fascist impulse move the Italian people ? By its very essence Fascism is moved towards Imperialism. . . . There are, moreover, signs which it would be difficult to mistake, and the expression 'the great Imperial Rome, immense soul of the Latin world,' which the Italian Duce loves to use, clearly marks this tendency."

Then was quoted an Italian Under-Secretary's declaration that "it belongs to Italy to colonise Mediterranean Africa," and this comment was made :

"These are manifestations to which must be given all the attention they deserve." . . . "The new ways that Signor Mussolini is tracing for Fascism," ran another French press comment, "seem intended to cross the limits of Italy and extend to an Italian Impero . . . which certainly implies a more extended colonial domain. . . . The friendship uniting France and Italy is too old, and the common memories of the war are too recent, for the words of the Duce to be taken in bad part by us. Nevertheless, they must hold our attention, for if, for the moment, they are only the expression of an ardent ideal, we should not close our eyes as to possible realisations."

However, with the passage of time and the multiplications of difficulties and dangers tending to weld the Latin peoples together, the opinion appears to be growing in France that some arrangement with Italy respecting Colonial Possessions or Mandates can and should be made. One

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French newspaper went so far as to say, let Italy have Syria. M. Briand, in the French Chamber of Deputies, said, "The Italians are a great people who increase by 500,000 every year. The Italian population is with difficulty contained in the Peninsula. It is natural that this steam under high pressure should seek to expand externally. Between France and Italy there exists no irreducible conflict of interests. The problems which present themselves will be amicably settled." "It would be unwise to shut up Italy in her peninsula," wrote the French publicist, M. Bainville, urging consideration of means of Italian expansion.

"Italy has been great in the Mediterranean: I will that she be so again." Such is the Italian leader's watchword.

Great Britain is also concerned in this affair, her "place in the sun" being so considerable, on the Mediterranean as elsewhere. Foreign opinion is that Signor Mussolini is progressively gaining the official sympathy of this country for his policy. One foreign observer has written: "If England at first received Fascism with that mistrust that she accords to all innovations, and with the astonishment of long Parliamentary tradition at a movement which is above all anti-Parliamentary, she has long since changed her view." This writer contends that British diplomacy is glad to renew the Mediterranean solidarity arrived at in the past by Lord Salisbury with the Italy of Crispi. He contends further that the present British Government "has envisaged with Signor Mussolini the possibility of realising the plans of colonial

expansion towards which are directed the aspirations of regenerated Italy."

The next imperial step was the Duce's voyage to Tripoli—an outstanding event in 1926, "the Napoleonic year of Fascism." In his first pronouncement made on African soil, he spoke of immortal Rome and its numerous vestiges persisting there in Africa. He said :

"Our august and mighty sovereign, King Victor Immanuel, has been pleased to send me to this land, now finally Italian. My voyage must not be understood as an ordinary act of administration . . . but as a manifestation of the power of the Italian people, which has its origin in Rome, and brings the triumphant and immortal Fascism of Rome to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It is destiny which drives us toward this land, and nobody can arrest the march of destiny. Above all, nobody can break our unshakeable will."

On various other occasions, as reported in the *Times* under the heading "The Meaning of the Visit," the Duce spoke of "the Roman colonies which are returning once more under the domination of Rome." The historic Roman significance of the visit to Tripoli was generally recognised by those on the spot. The Italian newspaper reports, of course, emphasised this. One of these read : "Signor Mussolini on his prancing bay horse appeared to be a Roman consul at the head of his legions. *Salve Imperator!* cried an American journalist. *Emir el Mausur!* (the lord of victory) exclaimed an Arab. And we Italians responded : It is the man of destiny." Another account ran : "The envoy of the King of Italy seemed to rise

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on horseback out of the sea, like a celestial warrior of fate. It is thus that the Berbers, the negroes, and the Bedouins saw him enter the city with the majesty of an authentic *condottiere* on his spirited battle-horse. . . . We read, on the face of the peoples present, the joyous will to obey the great chief. . . . It was truly the first day of the Italian Colonial Empire. . . ."

His triumphal progress ended, the Duce, in his farewell to Tripoli, declared :

" Our Italian race, which has shown itself in all times capable of performing miracles, seems to me, when I make them the object of my meditation, a singular prodigy of human history." . . . " When I think of the destiny of Italy, when I think of the destiny of Rome, when I think of the course of our history, I am led to see in all that procession of events the infallible hand of Providence. May God protect our people, our King, our nation. . . ."

Then he set sail.

Thus ended that chapter in the history of the revived Roman Empire.

Since then, the Franco-Spanish defeat of Abd el-Krim has opened the Moroccan question, and it is said that Italy may regard this as an occasion to apply the principle that no Mediterranean question can ever again be settled without full Italian participation. Tangier, it is further said, may be brought into discussion among the Mediterranean Powers. It remains to be seen whether the time and the situation are yet ripe for another step toward the resettlement of Mediterranean concerns upon the Roman imperial basis.

I X

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND ISLAM

IF we consult the map of Ancient Rome we shall notice that the imperial territory comprised certain lands, situated in the Mediterranean region, which are now Moslem. All this territory should, so far as our understanding of Prophecy goes, become part of the renewed Empire. Even now a large part of it does so belong—that is to say, is under the power or the influence of one or other of the Latin nations or of Great Britain. This is true of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Mesopotamia. The relation of Turkey to the Empire is discussed in the next chapter.

The inclusion in the Empire of the various Moslem peoples concerned is not simply a prophetic necessity. It is to-day, and will soon be even more so, *regarded by statesmen of Western Europe as a political and international necessity*. The new Roman Empire would not be itself if shorn of its historic oriental domain! For prestige, for prosperity, for defence, its extra-European domain was prized by Ancient Rome. For these very same reasons the reviving Empire desires them now. A clash with the Orient is feared, privately by statesmen, publicly by many writers. A pre-

ventive measure has been suggested. It is this ! To divide those forces which might otherwise and for purposes of aggression be united, by bringing the Moslems of the Mediterranean basin into partnership with Western Europe. That will produce the complete geographical reconstitution of the Roman Empire as it existed long ago. Better to have Islam for us than against us, it is already being argued. Not only is it needful to detach the Islamic peoples from the oriental mass in order to preserve a safe international balance, but Islam on its own account could be a formidable foe, as Europe has in days gone by discovered from bitter experience.

The Russian Soviet influence now operates to complicate relations between Islam and Europe, and, to quote the French Deputy, M. André Fribourg, in an article entitled "Islam, Soviets, Europe," "it is time for all the peoples threatened to realise the peril, and to practise as between these two adversaries a policy of dissociation." The chosen method of dissociation will be to associate with Western Europe the peoples, now Moslem, whom the Romans in their time, and Alexander the Great before them, brought within the charmed circle of the West.

The existence of a danger and the need of some policy, some action, to meet it is being widely affirmed. For instance, the *English Review* has said :

"Asia is stirring. Her long sleep broken at last, she looks with a new sense of gathering unity and with hope of ultimate triumph at the white

men, whom she has seen hurled back by a victorious Japan at the Gate of China, massacring each other in desperate internecine strife during four years of war. . . . The legend of white invincibility is shattered for ever; the world hegemony of the white man is doomed and draws swiftly towards its end. These are the thoughts, these the articulate ideas in minds working among nearly a thousand millions of the human race."

Concerning Islam, the *English Review* goes on to say :

"In the very van of this immense resurgence, like an organised force in the midst of inchoate legions, Islam is rearing again the banner which in the past so long overshadowed Christendom with its folds. From two hundred to two hundred and fifty millions is the estimated number of Mohammedans, and their religion is dominant throughout Southern Asia (with the exception of India, where they are in a minority), and the whole of Northern Africa from the Mediterranean to the Sahara. Beyond that limit are they now extending their sway, for they are making converts in vast numbers amongst the Central African blacks. We have been born and bred in that period—brief even as the life of a nation is measured—when the force of Islam had sunk to its lowest ebb and the paramountcy of the West seemed as permanent as the Himalayas. Yet so lately as the year 1683 Europe was still trembling before the advance of the Turk, and a Mohammedan army was besieging Vienna."

Earlier times saw Spain under a Moslem dominion lasting for centuries, and the complete conquest of Europe narrowly averted at the battle of Poitiers.

Surveying the modern revival and extension of Islam, the *English Review* inquires: "Whence comes the present wondrous renaissance of Islam?" and how is it that "a religion that fifty or a hundred years ago seemed, superficially at least, waning into the limbo of forgotten things, has found the source of a new life and has become once more a great and growing reality"? The writer attributes it largely to the activity of the Arabian Moslem sect, the Wahabis under Ibn Saoud. After depicting the result of such a calamity as a conflict between East and West, the article concludes: "These giant shadows of the coming time are already beginning to throw their darkness over the earth. To face, not to ignore them, is the part of wisdom."

They will be dispelled, these and all dark shadows, when Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, casts the light of His presence upon the earth. How much better that prospect than the one limned by M. Gustave le Bon in a recent article headed "The Menace of Conflict between the Orient and the Occident," in which he writes as though the most that the human race can hope is "not to go down too quickly into the eternal abyss to which the laws of evolution lead men, empires, and gods." M. le Bon declares:

"Asia knows the European States to be profoundly divided and incapable of union. . . . It is obviously possible that the peoples of the East, having the Russian armies at their head, may one day invade the West." . . . "A host of terrifying hypotheses can be formed on the subject," says

he, but maintains that such developments are as much beyond our control as an earthquake or the cooling of the planet. They show that "if human intelligence has evolved more rapidly than the feelings and passions, it has yet remained their slave, for it furnishes ambition and hate with the means of destruction, which will soon enable the annihilation of whole cities with their inhabitants."

While the human feelings and passions remain thus unregulated, the future, according to M. le Bon, remains too much charged with menace for it to be possible to predict human destiny.

Almighty God has, however, predicted it—has predicted that His Son, "the Lord our Righteousness," shall make human hearts obedient to His will, and shall cause the divine Kingdom to extend throughout the Universe. As the divine King of all nations, of the East as of the West, the Lord Jesus can and will, on His return, now so near, solve the racial question according to an ideal of His own, which is as far beyond the human mind to conceive as it is beyond human love and human power to apply.

Meanwhile publicists and statesmen are casting about for human means of averting calamity and regulating relations between the East and the West.

The winner of the American Bok Peace Award, Dr. Charles Levermore, after he had won it, made a survey of the "sore spots" where lie the chief dangers to world peace. First among these, he singled out Islam. He described the peril and suggested a remedy. The peril he sees thus :

"Islam is essentially a militant religion. Its spirit tends towards a fierce fanaticism. The Mohammedan ideal to-day is but little different from that of the Arabs who went forth centuries ago to conquer Christian peoples. The foundations of the Saracenic power were laid in war. The conclusion is that Mohammedanism is a source of danger to international peace because its founders based it upon force, bade it go forth to conquer, and blessed it in so doing. In this respect Islam is unique among the important religions."

The remedy that Dr. Levermore proposes is that Islam shall be won to friendship and co-operation. He says :

"If the organised world, now functioning at Geneva, can find out how to attract and retain the co-operation of orthodox Moslem States, and can through them, without injury to legitimate aspirations towards independence, begin to soften this untamed and aggressive spirit by the process of friendly counsel and goodwill, it will thereby go far towards the healing of one of the most dangerous aberrations of the human mind."

That happens to be the very line upon which the nations of the Roman Empire are going to move. A tentative step in that direction was made by the adoption of the Mandatory system. This was a modification of the cruder method of taking and exercising unrestricted domination over the lands concerned. The Mandatory Powers, Great Britain and France, have already modified their Mandates, thus advancing farther on the path of conciliation. Iraq is no longer under Mandate as she was at the outset, but under a régime

according greater independence. The French are following suit in Syria. The Mandate system as applied to these regions is virtually ended except in Palestine, of which a subsequent chapter speaks.

In the name of self-determination of peoples and self-government, the Southern Mediterranean peoples who have been under European control, whether from pre-war days or only since the war, are demanding a change. There are three ways of responding to this demand. First, to resist the demand by force; second, to let them go and become entirely separate from, and perhaps antagonistic to, Europe. The third way is at once or progressively to withdraw control, substituting for it, in manner adapted to each one of the Moslem peoples concerned, a contract of alliance and co-operation, providing for economic advantage and martial defence. Something of this was foreshadowed about a year ago by the French representative on the League of Nations, M. Paul Boncour. On the subject of French Colonial policy he remarked that a new point of departure has been reached. It is high time, he maintained, to oppose the policy of Moscow, "which tends to nothing less than to submerge the world under a flood of exasperated nationalism," a general and organic conception. This conception, without in anything repudiating the great historic fact represented by the foundation of the colonial empire, should, said M. Boncour, be directed—not precipitately, not violating the fundamental differences of race and culture—toward making this evolve toward its proper end, which is, under a

régime of treaties and economic co-operation, the progressive liberation of the conquered peoples, already liberated by our conquest, from the previously existing anarchy and servitude to their own chiefs. Since then the new development of French policy in Syria has begun.

At no distant time, it would seem, the new settlement with Islam will be made. Though the settlement apply only to the Moslem peoples dwelling within the old Roman border-line, yet the ramifications of Islam are so many and far-reaching that, through their association with these peoples, the Western nations may expect to be in peaceful relation with the Islamic world as a whole. That, indeed, is one more of the facts explaining the prophesied supremacy of the Roman Empire in the closing period of this Age. Persia may be expected to side with the Empire, and she is, of course, part of the Image-territory involved in Daniel's prophecy. Of more distant lands it may be true to-morrow, as it was in old times, when, says Gibbon, the Roman name was revered among the most remote nations of the earth. Considering the vast territories on the map of the Empire and the other affiliations which this restored Roman Empire will have, its prophesied power is not wholly surprising.

What will draw the Moslem peoples into willing association with Western Europe is above all the might, the prestige, the attraction, the glamour of the Roman Empire to which, in ancient times they did actually belong.

The compelling power of this great Institution

even in its decline, was such that the very foes who could have destroyed it preferred to become part of and to restore it. "The grandeur that was Rome" is to be outshone by the grandeur that will be, in its final career.

Then there is the magnetic power of leadership.. This, the final leader of Rome, whosoever he may prove to be, will possess *in excelsis*. And the Moslem believes in leadership, thrills to it, answers to it. As in a "magic" painting-book, the colours come to sight at the touch of the moistened brush, we see, now that the brush of the fulness of time touches the prophetic picture drawn so long ago, the colours start into life and the picture steadily becomes complete.

X

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND TURKEY

ACCORDING to the Roman map, Turkey will be included in the revived Empire. The present Turkish territory was a highly important part of Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires in turn. It is a land steeped in the history of the early Church. All that points to its inclusion in the Roman Empire in its modern phase.

The new Turkey has taken "Westernisation" as a watchword. The Western calendar, alphabet, dress, and various manners and customs have been adopted, as by some attraction which the country cannot or will not resist.

That the inclusion of Turkey might come through war, not through peaceful agreement, seemed all too likely while the Anglo-Turkish controversy regarding Mosul was still acute. But, now that the agreement between Great Britain and Turkey has been made, the peaceful entrance of Turkey into the Roman imperial group is an obvious probability. It is said that as the outcome of negotiation with Great Britain, Turkey contemplates joining the League of Nations. This indicates a tendency to associate with the Western nations.

How and to what end Italo-Turkish relations

will be adjusted is another question which time and events will answer. Italy's profound interest in that part of the world is indubitable. For every reason, the promoters of the Roman imperial revival will do all possible to bring Turkey within the Empire. The decisive importance, not only commercial but strategic, of the Turkish domain, and all the more that it includes Constantinople, is obvious. The master of that domain can, in some sort, turn the world-balance.

Asia Minor must be a prominent consideration when it comes to the inevitable and imminent re-organisation of Mediterranean affairs. All, and more than all, the reasons prompting the inclusion of Turkey's Mediterranean neighbours in the renovated Roman Empire will apply to Turkey herself. Indeed, an arrangement with Turkey has, for some time, found advocates, as being the key to the Islamic problem. In this connection a small volume entitled *Manuel de Politique Musulmane*, written by an anonymous author, has been largely noticed on the Continent. Its author says :

"The new Turkey sits astride Asia. 'Turkey is becoming the educator of her Asiatic neighbours,' says a prominent Turkish intellectual. One of these neighbours has said that Islam is a big body of which Turkey is the head. . . . It is obvious that the day that Turkey, feeling behind her the formidable pressure of Asiatic Islam, and counting also upon the eventual support of Northern Africa, should nourish designs of expansion towards the West, there would arise a great danger for the Mediterranean Powers and

particularly for us (the French). And if Russia lent support, secret or open . . . bringing after her one day the troops of Central Asia, the former clientele of the Genghis Khans and the Tamerlanes ; in the event, finally, of the German uniting with the Slav, it would be a whole coalition of the vanquished in the Great War, hurling themselves furiously upon those further West. The policy of a 'good European' would be to make the interests of Turkey identical with those of Europe by large concessions and a spirit of intelligent friendship.

"An Islamic Mediterranean *bloc*, inspired by France, would be able to constitute an efficacious barrier against the Slavo-Mongol waves.

"Bonaparte had the grandiose idea of utilising Islam for a vast enterprise of warlike conquest. . . . Who knows whether our African Islam, where floats the French flag from Timbuctoo to Tunis, associated with an Egyptian and Turkish Islam, would not afford a definite basis for the peace of the ancient world and the maintenance of her threatened culture and civilisation ?"

Such a policy is likely to be carried through, not by France alone, but by the whole number of European Powers seated on the Mediterranean. However this may come to pass, the ultimate place of Asia Minor will be, it would seem, in the restored Roman Empire ; and the present probability is, especially since the new Turko-British agreement, that its inclusion in the Roman Empire will be effected as part of a general arrangement with the Moslem lands of the Mediterranean region.

X I

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AND THE JEWS

THE Jews are to be as much a part of the Roman Empire as they were of old. Palestine is on the Roman map, and the Jews are already returning to Palestine, which the Gentiles of the League of Nations, following the lead of Great Britain, whose soldiers liberated the land, have recognised as the Jewish National Home.

The Jewish question is ripening for further attention. Little is yet said of this in public, but public action will come. The Jewish people, powerful in numbers, in political influence, and in wealth throughout the world, and increasingly attracted and attached to Zion, will assuredly expect concessions in regard to the Promised Land, which shall in some sense correspond to the concessions made to the peoples who are neighbours to Palestine. The melting away of the Mandatory system, which is taking place within the Roman boundary, will compel a reconsideration of the present situation in Palestine. A powerful solvent of the Mandatory system in the Mediterranean area is Italy's objection to it, on the ground that it takes no account of her and her claim to a voice in all Mediterranean concerns. The Jews themselves seem to be incompletely satisfied with the

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existing régime, judging by such utterances as follow, from the *Jewish Chronicle* :

"Neither the local administration nor the government appears yet to realise that Great Britain is Mandatory in Palestine, with the chief object of fostering and encouraging Jewish effort in the building up of the Jewish National Home, or that the prosperity of the country, so vitally important to British interests, is dependent upon the success of Jewish effort in that direction. It is to be hoped that these somewhat elemental facts will sooner or later be grasped by officialdom, and the absurdity perceived of its regarding the Jews in Palestine as just a native element in some ordinary colonial enterprise."

The fact is that all the British goodwill represented by the Balfour Declaration has not availed to overcome the difficulty of Arab hostility to a restoration of the Jewish National Home in Palestine. When, however, the general Mediterranean resettlement comes to be made, involving the great Powers of the Mediterranean and the Moslem peoples concerned, the question of Jewish-Arab relations will appear more amenable to treatment by bargain and negotiation. Precedent and prophecy indicate that Jewish nationhood, under a protective guarantee, will be recognised, and also Jewish religious liberty. This implies that existing difficulties will be composed, and, in particular, that Moslem assent will be obtained.

The ultimate aim of Zionism has been expressed by an English Rabbi, and approved by one of the organs of Jewish opinion, as follows :

"Zionism is a national movement, and its objects are the re-establishment of an autonomous Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, where the people who have contributed so much towards civilisation, by giving the world its religion and its morality, can live again an undisturbed life, free to develop their traditions and their teachings. . . ."

Rather interesting in this connection is the war-time conversation between Lord Balfour and M. Paul Cambon, the French diplomat, as reported in his memoirs by Lord Bertie of Thame, the late ambassador in Paris :

"Paul Cambon said that Balfour explained his support of Zionism as partly financial and partly political, and also sentimental. Balfour's own feeling is that it would be an interesting experiment to reconstitute a Jewish kingdom. Cambon reminded him of the prophecy that a King of the Jews would be an end of the world. Balfour thinks that such a *dénouement* will be still more interesting."

Let us hope for new and serious study by statesmen and diplomats of the biblical prophecies that have been given to them for their guidance as this Age (not world) nears its predicted end !

Beginning with the British victory in 1917, a really marvellous advance, which the world would not have believed beforehand, has been made in the matter of the Jews' return to Zion. The next forward move certainly seems imminent, and doubtless the Jews in Palestine will go from strength to strength.

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Prophecy, however, shows that the complete and real return to Zion will be only when Messiah comes. Before then, the last head of the Roman Empire, in its very last phase, will have initiated or confirmed a Covenant with the Jews which will seem to satisfy their highest aims and dearest wishes for Zion, but midway through the seven years the Covenant will be broken, and then will follow the last short, sharp tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, to end with Messiah's coming to deliver and redeem His people.

Meanwhile, it is well to realise that opposition to the Jewish return to Palestine is futile. They are destined to return. Prudence, if nothing more, would counsel: "If it be of God, you cannot overthrow it: lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."¹ Christians should desire it: first, because it is the declared will of God, expressed in the Scriptures upon which the Christian Faith is based; and second, because the Jews' return to Palestine is the sign of signs that their Messiah, our Christ, is soon to appear.

The veriest Gentile must surely view with sympathy this homeward movement of the long-dispersed toward the Land of Divine Promise, and must see, behind all this, the working of the God who led Israel out of Egypt long ago, who is already re-gathering them, and will hereafter gather them all to that great final Day of Atonement when they shall behold their Redeemer face to face. Then the cry will go forth: "He was

¹ Acts v. 39.

wounded for our transgressions"! God, as He promised Abraham, did provide for Himself a Lamb!

The true Feast of Tabernacles will follow:

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. . . ."

Messianic, Christly redemption and rule are promised in the law, the Psalms, and the prophets, as the goal of Jewish national history. The time is near when it will be said: "Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King!" when He will "beautify them with salvation."

"Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: No one of these things shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded."

XII

RELIGION IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

A RELIGIOUS Babel! So could ancient Rome be most fitly named from the spiritual point of view. There was a medley of religions there. Rome was the meeting-place of cults and creeds without number. The classic gods of the Græco-Roman West were joined by those of the Eastern mystery cults. There was an infinite variety of beliefs and of worship. A philosophic scepticism was not wanting, to fill up the measure. Religious liberty of a sort prevailed, for men might believe anything, everything, or nothing, on condition that they rendered overt homage to the State religion. There was thus a peculiar unity in diversity. A religious Babylon indeed!

"How crowded the whole of life was with cult and ritual and usage, how full of divinities, petty, pleasing, or terrible, but generally vague and ill-defined, no one will readily realise without special study," says one writer; adding that no polytheistic religion can exclude from its Pantheon any gods that man may devise, and hence the multiplication of religions in that pagan time.

Discussing the Roman remains in their religious aspect, the author¹ of *The Romans in Britain* writes that :

¹ Professor Bertram Windle.

"In order to understand the very tangled subject of the religious memorials found in Britain and the cults associated with them, we must bear in mind the extraordinary and almost universal tolerance of the Romans for all sorts and kinds of beliefs, and the ease with which one belief was added on to another. . . ."

The relations between East and West, initiated by Alexander the Great's career of conquest, and continued, owing to Rome's increasing preoccupation with the East, occasioned an intermingling of Eastern religions with Western polytheism. All forms of occultism found devotees. Rome, religiously speaking, was peopled with gods of all sorts and sizes, and of every degree, from those deemed of major importance down to the gods of the hearth and the nature spirits of forest and stream. There was a spiritual hunger, and this demanded to be fed. There was a seeking after supernatural truth, and the people of that day satisfied their hunger and their craving for truth as best they knew how. The case is very different now. "The times of that ignorance," as the Apostle told the Athenians, "God overlooked; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as He hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." ¹

The parallelism between the ancient Roman Empire and the new Roman Empire will be found

¹ Acts xvii. 30, 31 (R.V.).

in religion, as in all else. What the religious condition was at the beginning of the Roman Empire, it will be at the end of the Empire. Even now, the variety and multiplication of non-christian creeds and cults is noticeable. In recent times it has become a feature of the religious life of the Western lands, and as the Age advances to its end, a resurgence of Paganism will be seen, together with the decline of belief in Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God."¹ Non-christian religions will gain ground, and there will be in large measure a reversion to the past condition—only with this difference, that these will not be times of ignorance, as were the times before the incarnation, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the preaching by the Apostles of Him incarnate, crucified, and risen again. Will God, therefore, overlook the denial of His Son?

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He first loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."²

If the all-dominant fact of the Incarnation is to be ignored and the gift of God's Son is to be rejected, if men do not care to be "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," the position, as the Apostle has shown, is in one respect very different from that of pre-incarnation times. It will be all

¹ Matt. xvi. 16.

² 1 John iv. 9, 10.

the more different in the last days of the Age, when the prophesied signs and warnings will prove conclusively that the same Jesus who died for mankind is about to come back again.

"A falling away" is the apostolic prediction of the religious condition on the eve of His second coming—a falling away from the belief held by the early Christians. Even the Roman Empire, within whose boundary Christianity was founded and was first preached and believed, will be the scene of this falling away. It has begun already, and is found in those who leave the various Christian churches, and even among some who still formally remain within their ranks. The inclusion in the Empire of peoples professing non-christian faiths, however politically prudent their inclusion may seem, will lead up to this—that a demand will arise for an imperial religion that takes account of all religions and not only of Christianity. By way of illustration, one may cite in passing the argument of one who has said that the Church of England has really no right to preach any theological doctrine which would not be approved and accepted by any or every non-christian under the British flag.

The admission of non-christian peoples as members of the Roman Imperial Confederacy will, sooner or later, be followed by claims that no official preference shall be given to Christianity, and that inasmuch as it is confederate with non-christendom, Christendom shall cease to call itself Christendom in the official sense. The call will be for an Empire religion including the doctrines

common to all religions, and excluding those in which there is pronounced disagreement—excluding, that is to say, the doctrine of the Supremacy of the Lord Jesus as Redeemer, as King of kings and Lord of lords, as the embodiment of the fulness of the Godhead.

Some day, as says that great Messianic Psalm,¹ “all nations shall fall down before Him, all nations shall call Him blessed,” but that will be when He reappears in His visible supremacy. Meanwhile there are peoples who by no means accept Him as Lord and God, and several of these will form part of the Roman confederacy. ‘Will the Crescent efface itself before the Cross? That is the point!

This will be a main cause of the great falling away of Christendom from its allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ! Also there are sceptical elements in Christendom itself which are predisposed in that direction, who profess themselves unable to accept what has, since the first days of the Christian Church, been taught of Jesus as to His deity, His atoning death, His resurrection and return. Furthermore, there are, in the West, large numbers who profess non-christian religions which differ from Christianity in their belief respecting the Lord Jesus. Support will be forthcoming, therefore, for a composite religion, differing from Christianity as to the incarnation, the atonement, the bodily resurrection, the personal visible return, and the deity of Jesus, Son of God. Unanimity concerning Him is not predicted by the Bible until the very day of His coming again,

¹ Ps. lxxii.

when "all tribes of the earth" will raise the cry, "Behold, He cometh with the clouds!"¹

Now arises for notice the prophecy of the cult of the last head of the Empire. This again will be, and in exaggerated form even, a repetition of past history. For in Ancient Rome the Cæsars were worshipped. The last Cæsar of the Empire, in its last days, will, according to prophecy, demand worship, "so that he as god sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." The cult of the ruling Emperor became the State religion of the ancient Empire—precisely so it will be in the last phase of the Empire.

This theme of Emperor-worship is, as it happens, interestingly prominent in some recently published works, in one of which we read :

"In a modified form the cult of the living Empire took root even in Italy, where Augustus encouraged the worship not of himself but of his genius, a distinction with but little difference for the uneducated masses. Not all his successors were so modest. There was a gradual assimilation to a divine monarch of the oriental type."²

On the Hellenic side the way had been prepared for acceptance of the doctrine of the Emperor's divinity by the notion of hero-worship. As for the Eastern dominions of Rome, the deification and worship of monarchs was an ancient practice to which the Orientals resorted with readiness. In pre-Roman time Alexander the Great had taken

¹ Rev. i. 7.

² *The Pagan Background of Early Christianity*, by W. R. Halliday.

advantage of this tendency to advance his imperial designs, and had received divine honours.

The Roman Cæsars sought to add spiritual power to their temporal power and thus make their dominion complete. Their religious control might well be more effective than their political and military control, in holding together the extensive and disparate lands of the Empire.

“The religious bond was essential to the imperial unity. The Roman Empire must have such a bond; it was not to be found in the multifarious Roman religions existing, nor in the exotic religions, and so the imperial religion was set up. Augustus allowed himself to be made Pontifex Maximus in A.D. 27, and thus became head of religion as well as of the State. There followed the centralisation of worship round the person of the Emperor. At first in Rome, though not in the provinces, this worship did not come to the Emperor while alive. In the provinces, where the religious bond was above all important, the living and reigning Emperor did receive the worship of a god.”¹

One of the main preparations for the predicted worship of a man, during the last years of this Dispensation, has been the preaching that Jesus, however good, was only a man and was not One with the Father, except in being in uncommonly close communion with Him—was not God in the complete sense, but divine only in the sense in which, as such preaching has it, all men are divine, Jesus being different from other men, not in kind but only in degree. If the Christian Church has, as

¹ Professor Bertram Windle.

is thus claimed, existed for some two thousand years on the basis of preaching and worshipping One who, however remarkable, was merely a man, it will seem quite as logical to found a new Church and conduct a worship dedicated to another remarkable man ! The object of worship will be, to their thinking, the same, with only this difference that it is another man !

The mode of worship, the ritual, will, as far as may be, be the same. Among non-Christians, there are many who attach great importance to forms of Christian worship : and indeed they claim the right to use them, saying that this all has a significance which is independent of the doctrines upon which its Christian practitioners base it. Such forms will doubtless, as far as thought practicable, be appropriated to the cult and worship of the Antichrist. To make up the religion of the Antichrist all religions will be amalgamated, even Christianity—but Christianity without “the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.”¹

A critical and supreme choice will, in those days, be put before all who follow Jesus Christ as God and as Saviour. Again it will be in the last days as it was in those first days, when the early Christians withheld from the Emperor the worship which they owed to their Lord and God. Modern minds are apt to be incredulous when told, on prophetic authority, of the future apotheosis of a human ruler, of a regular cult of this personage, of his statues to be worshipped ; of a high priest, the

¹ Tit. ii. 13.

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false prophet of this neo-paganism, which is to have Emperor-worship at its summit, of pains and penalties; persecution, in a word, for refusal to worship as prescribed. They forget that the thing has happened before, and what has been will be.

What do historians tell us?

"The early Christians were persecuted, not—though there was some pretence of this—for their doctrines, but because they refused to accept the State religion."¹

"The formal fulfilment of its prescribed acts of worship upon official occasions offended no conscience but that of the Christians, for Christianity was unique in being exclusive. Hence Emperor-worship offered a test of loyalty by which Christians alone necessarily failed, and refusal to comply with its formal requirements inevitably brought them to the hostile notice of the secular power."²

In his *Early Years of Christianity* M. E. de Pressensé says:

"Fully ready as he was to submit to human authority, because he recognised in it the presence of a higher law, the Christian could not prostrate himself before a fellow-man without renouncing his faith in the one living and true God. Humility and dignity were blended in his character; the same faith which had laid him low at the feet of Christ, kept him erect before man. The worshipper of the Most High could not adore, as God, that which was but dust and ashes before the Creator. 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.'

¹ *The Legacy of Rome.*

² W. R. Halliday.

. . . 'If all is Cæsar's, what will remain for God?' asked Tertullian. No decision could have been more complete or clear, but none could have struck a severer blow at the social constitution of the whole ancient world or thrown down a bolder challenge to the powers of the Age. . . . To dispute the divinity of the Emperor was the worst impiety. The Christians could not but come under the condemnation of this terrible statute of high treason, and torrents of Christian blood proved its unsparing vengeance. . . .

"'I pray to my God for the Emperor,' said a martyr, 'but sacrifice in his honour ought not to be demanded nor presented. How can divine honours be accorded to a man?'"¹

The moral of the crowded happenings of the last short years of this Age will be this—that humanity, without Christ Jesus, "can do nothing." Those who trust in themselves will stumble and fall. Those who turn from themselves, both from their own wickedness and even from what they may think their own righteousness, and "look unto Him" and "abide in Him," will be safe in His strength and credited with His righteousness. Those who range themselves under His standard will be partakers in His victory. This final challenge that will be made by Him, the summons to all on earth to be for or against Him, will, in the last days of the Age, kindle in many, many hearts a flame of devotion to Jesus, Saviour and God, such as has been unknown since the first preaching of His name.

¹ Volume on *Martyrs and Apologists*, pp. 74-76.

XIII

THE PHENOMENON OF CÆSARISM

THE rise of Dictatorship in the closing years of this Age, on the eve of the Lord's return, has been long announced by students of prophecy who have seen this political phenomenon foreshown in the Bible.

Dictatorship has now actually appeared, and political thinkers are astonished and concerned as to what this may portend.

When will they turn to the Bible for light on things present and to come? The new dictatorships, without being confined to the Roman nations, are nevertheless characteristic of the imperial system. Caesarism is of the essence of the Roman Empire, which took its rise in one-man rule.

"No present fact is more significant than the reaction in many nations against democracy and in favour of one-man power." This is the summing-up of a distinguished American, Mr. James Beck, former Solicitor-General of the United States, addressing the National Republican Club of America. "It matters not," he said, "whether the one man be called a Czar, an Emperor, a King, or a Dictator—the essential fact is his

power. To-day half the oldest nations of Europe are in the grasp of dictators."

Another authority, no less than Sir Sidney Low, author of *The Governance of England*, is also impressed by this humanly unforeseen though biblically foreshown rise of Dictatorship. He says :

"Thirty years ago, if anybody had told us that the next generation would see the waning of democracy and parliamentary government, we should have laughed. It would have seemed like saying that we should presently discard the railways and go back to stage-coaches. Since the war, which was to make the world safe for democracy, there has been widespread abandonment of representative and democratic government and a remarkable reversion to personal rule."

One country after another has turned to "some kind of dictatorial régime."

The position is described by Sir Sidney Low as follows :

"This year 1926 opened with a broad belt of dictatorships, extending from the Atlantic seaboard to Central Asia. Mussolini started the game; his success has inspired imitators and adapters all over the Mediterranean and Near Eastern area. So now we have constitutionalism suspended, or heavily fettered, in Spain, Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, Turkey, and Persia."

From Germany come recurrent reports of threatened political change. As to France, it is a wonder to many that Dictatorship has not been established there. Some time ago it seemed imminent, and then the moment passed. A

Socialist dictator or dictatorial triumvirate was rumoured. Some spoke of General Foch. Others perhaps were seeking, without yet finding, some superman still unknown. As the proofs of this book are being revised, the report arrives of a French so-called duumvirate, of "dictatorial air," and the opinion of onlookers seems to be that a further step has been taken toward Dictatorship in France, even if the duumvirate should not survive the difficulties confronting it. Belgium has been passing through political trouble, and pro-dictatorial sentiment is said to exist even there. Poland has had her *coup d'état*, and so has Portugal, and thus the list of more or less dictatorial régimes grows longer and longer.

The Mother of Parliaments seems likely to survive her daughters, and this country may very soon be the only home in Europe of representative government. And even here, representative government has lately had to fight for its life.

The Reds of Russia and the British Government, each from their own standpoint, concur in the belief that Constitutional Government was attacked. It would have been attacked with success had not the community given, as a foreign observer has expressed it, "an example of discipline and intelligent defence of public liberties that many peoples would undoubtedly be incapable of repeating." Yet the Prime Minister's words should be recalled: "There has never been in this world a perfect instance of democracy at work. We in this country may make a fearful mess of it, and if we make a mess of it we shall get

a tyranny of some kind or another. It may be the Communist tyranny ; it may be tyranny from the other end. But, if you cannot evolve a sound and sane democracy, that will be the fate of the country."

The Spanish dictator asserts that "Parliamentary government is breaking up in all countries. It has had its time. It is necessary to substitute for it a modern system more in harmony with the economics of our day." The continental nations, living as they do in a chronic state of emergency which does not pass away, but on the contrary tends to increase, and to be complicated by the menace of another war, are more and more inclined, in desperation, to call for a Strong Man.

Perhaps democratic government has ever been something of a borrowed plume so far as these nations are concerned. Hero-worship, the love of following a lead and a leader, is more in their temperament, it may be, than a devotion to the principles of representative government. Certainly the younger people in those lands seem to feel coldly on the question of democracy, and to be impassioned for or against the two opposing forms of dictatorship, Fascist or Bolshevik, as we may for convenience call them. They live always more or less upon a war footing, to the tune of rumours of war. In such conditions dictatorship seems to them, in these dangerous days, especially to afford the best available guarantee of national safety. Hence the decline of democracy and the rise of personal dictatorship.

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The philosophy of dictatorship finds its chief exponent in the Fascist leader, Signor Mussolini, who claims that democratic institutions are, in Italy, both dead and buried. Dictatorship in his view is not a temporary expedient for time of danger. It is the proper and normal mode of government. "The consent of the people is as mutable as the sands of the seashore." "The consent of the people is never permanent."¹

"For Mussolini, with his determination to carry into effect his great ideals," we are told, "even the 5,000,000 votes he obtained from the Italian people in that marvellous plebiscite of 1924 were only such support as a turn of fortune may sweep away." "In Italy there are no unemployed, and people earn enough to live decently. In our country reign peace, discipline, security. What more does a people want? What the people want is to work, to earn, and to live in comfort. No one wants Liberty with a capital L, the fetish of a bygone century."²

"We tell the responsible factors in other countries that they should do away with verbose Parliamentaryism."³

A singularly interesting convert to Dictatorship, to Fascism, was, it is learnt, the Italian statesman, Sidney Sonnino. An intimate friend tells of two conversations with him shortly before his death.

¹ *Life of Mussolini*, by Sarfatti.

² Interview with Dr. Andre Reversz.

³ Speech at Rome on seventh anniversary of Fascism.

In the first :

"Sonnino talked to me of the general condition of Italy, showing such grave preoccupation concerning the future of the country, a sadness so heart-rending, a pessimism so despairing, that I protested that I could not believe that the situation was without a remedy, and I said to him: 'If instead of seventy years old you were fifty, and they called you again to be head of the Government, you would certainly find the means of saving the country.' He paused in his walk—I seem to see him still—and after a silence he said: 'No; I could do nothing to save Italy; it needs a *coup d'état*.' I was dumb, moved by the gravity of this declaration and the intensity of feeling that animated his words. I left and did not return until after the march on Rome. You imagine with what impatience I hastened to see Sidney Sonnino and hear from his own lips what he thought of the grave events in progress. I found Sonnino transformed, less bent, smiling, happy! Without giving me time to question him, he exclaimed: 'Here it is, the *coup d'état* invoked for the saving of the country. Henceforth every Italian has but one duty—to help Mussolini with all his power, even if he makes mistakes. . . .'"

Similarly in France a yearning for a strong man's personal rule is reviving memories of a crisis in earlier history when a strong man arose. "To-day as then," the word goes, "France looks over the heads of the politicians who talk, when they should act, and quarrel among themselves, and she awaits and hopes for a saviour. The mystic belief in the coming at the critical moment of the providential Man is often deceptive. The proof

is that great and powerful nations have collapsed, leaving perhaps hardly a memory . . . and yet! . . ." Then the description of France in a past day: "Ruined, exhausted, discouraged, threatened by invasion, on the brink of the grave. . . . Suddenly in the night a gleam—Bonaparte on his way to Paris! All France awakened from the torpor of despair and, with an infallible certitude, recognised in Bonaparte the man marked out by destiny who was to be her saviour."¹

For how short a time! And what France suffered, even while this very "saviour" still lived; and has suffered since!

No! Human saviours are not enough for any country. They make mistakes, their health and judgment fail, they go too far, ambition intoxicates them, they destroy what they have built, and lose what they have saved.

Chief difficulty of all! Even the perfect Dictator dies. That must be the secret tragedy at a benevolent Dictator's heart. What will become of his work, what will become of his country when he is gone? Himself knows best how irreplaceable he is—knows the unremitting toil, the invariable tenacity, the unblinking alertness, the countless secret loyalties that his task requires, the constant weight his shoulders have to bear. Who is there to succeed him? That is the question, seeing that human Dictators are as subject to death as other mortals. More so, perhaps! Julius Cæsar was treacherously assassinated by "respectable"

¹ From *The Saviour of France*, by Paul Fontana de Vico.

men, in deliberate conspiracy, a crime whose horror is fresh to this day.

Human nature slew its divine Redeemer, God manifest in the flesh.

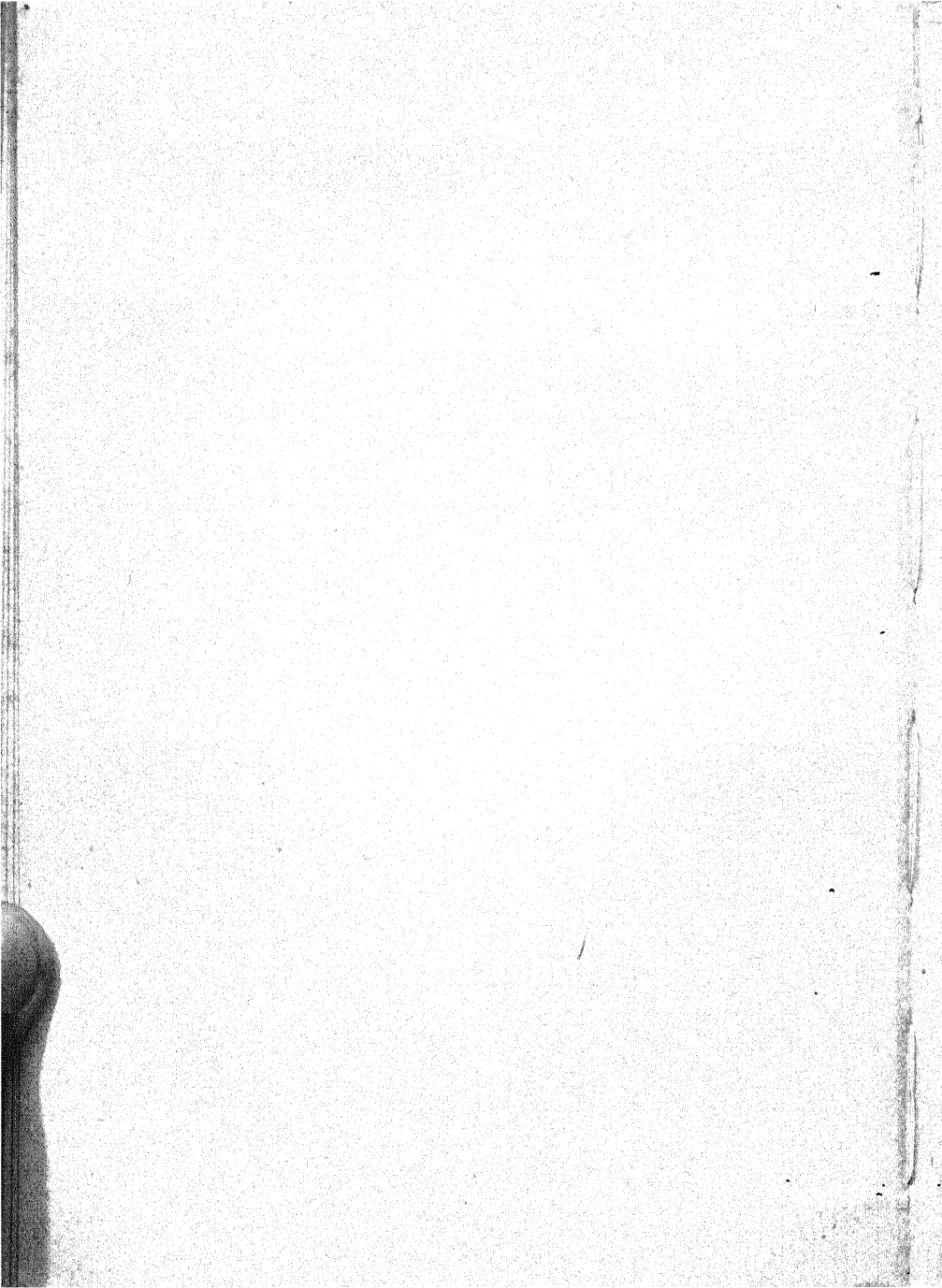
It slays also its Cæsars !

Human Dictatorship cannot save the world : firstly, because human rule is not lasting, is not strong enough, wise enough, righteous enough, long enough ; secondly, because human nature needs the redemptive power and the controlling power belonging to God alone.

Let all rejoice then in "that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."¹

¹ Tit. ii. 13.

PART II
PROPHECY, HISTORY AND SCIENCE



XIV

CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST

WHERE will the Antichrist arise? Who will he be? How will he gain the great power predicted? How long will his career last? Those inquiries are unanswerable until time and event are riper. The decisive facts by which he will be identifiable when the time comes are, as has been shown, his attitude towards God as expressed in his self-deification and his claim to be worshipped; also by his dealings with the Jews and, it should be added, with all who in the days of his great power declare themselves followers of Christ.

All interpretations of prophecy agree that the Antichrist will arise in one of the countries included in the Roman domain. It does not appear that he will necessarily arise in the Western half. The increasing power of the Eastern peoples makes it conceivable that supreme world-power might at some future date, if the great heavenly intervention be sufficiently delayed, be grasped by an Eastern-Roman hand. That expansion of Eastern religious and cultural influences upon Western thought, which is noticeably accompanying the present more material renaissance of the East, would be not unfavourable to such a *dénouement*.

Conjecture as to the identity of the Antichrist is as yet unprofitable, because our human part is not to prophesy on matters still in doubt, but rather to recognise the fulfilment of divine prophecy as and when it occurs.

The time at which Antichrist will be known, and the time at which the true Christ will appear, the present writer does not profess to know, but what is definitely maintained is this: From now onward—indeed, the British victory in Palestine in 1917 may be regarded as a starting-point—the Age is steadily approaching its close. The events which are supplying us with the signs of the times are quite enough, apart from any chronological theory of prophetic interpretation, to prove that the end of the Age is near. One chronological sign should be noticed, however, and that is the seven years' duration of a future covenant with the Jews, which the last head of the Roman Empire will sign. It is believed by students of prophecy that this seven years' period will be the end-time of the Age, the last seven years before Messiah comes. Precisely how long it will be before this final period begins we do not yet know, but it is well to consider the recent acceleration of the speed of events. Only twelve years have passed since the outbreak of the Great War, and the changes of centuries have occurred in that short time! This curious acceleration increases. The cinematograph handle is being turned faster and faster, and what we were wont to think the natural pace of history is quickening and quickening to a hurry, a scamper, a rush. The Time factor is

certainly reduced to a minimum. We begin, therefore, to understand that the many and mighty things of the Age-end need not be long in the doing. . . .

The outstanding fact about the Antichrist is his self-exaltation in rivalry and antagonism to Christ. The possession of great power is not his distinguishing mark. Such power might well be needful and beneficent, pending the return of Christ, if it were avowedly held in trust for, and in open loyalty to Christ, if, like another ruler in the past, the repository of world-power desired only to lay his world-power and its insignia at the feet of the returning Christ Jesus.

Upon divers individuals and nations in history, power has been conferred by God for divine purposes. The past advance from obscurity to national grandeur of the people Israel must have appeared to us as the will and the work of God, even if the fact were not scripturally affirmed, for it could not be easily accounted for on grounds of human probability. Again Cyrus, the Gentile, is shown as trustee of God-given power to be used for the benefit of Israel :

“ I am the Lord that saith of Cyrus, He is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure : even saying to Jerusalem : Thou shalt be built ; and to the Temple : Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him. . . . I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight : I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. . . . For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel Mine elect, I have even

called thee by thy name : I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me." ¹

A modern historian has described this same Cyrus as "that most majestic and gracious figure who inspired the respect and admiration of the contemporary world and of posterity." The prophecy is so remarkable (and not least in its actual pre-naming of Cyrus), and was so remarkably fulfilled, that scepticism has been reduced to the argument that it must have been a contemporary utterance and not a prophecy at all. It is here cited to illustrate the fact that great power has been conferred by God upon particular human Kings and peoples, pending the future reign of His Son. The British people have been thus honoured for centuries. The revival of the Roman Empire or any other system of world-control, capable of functioning until the Lord Jesus returns to rule, might be a good and necessary thing in itself. For God "removeth Kings and setteth up Kings : He ruleth in the Kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." ² It is not the use of power that is wrong, but its abuse ; it is the tendency inherent in Kings and empires to degenerate, pluming themselves upon the power which they have of God and not of themselves, and even to set themselves in opposition to God. Thus :

"The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty ? While the word was in

Isa. xlv. 28, xlv. 1, 2, 4.

² Dan. ii. 21, iv. 25.

the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven . . . The Kingdom is departed from thee." ¹

There we have a wonderful illustration, but mild and in miniature, of the ways and the destiny of the Antichrist.

Politically, the Antichrist will behave, not as Cyrus, but rather as Tyrus, not as God's trustee and servant, but as rebel, purposing to be, not the regent, but the rival of Christ.

Religiously, the Antichrist is the summing up, the personification of the whole antichristian tendency of some nineteen centuries. "He is Antichrist," says St. John, "that denieth the Father and the Son: whosoever denieth the Son hath not the Father." ² The Old Testament prophecy foreshows this individual denying the Son by deifying himself, and denying the Father by trafficking with another god. And in the Apocalypse we read of those who follow him that "they worshipped the dragon which gave power to the Beast, and they worshipped the Beast."

One contemporary philosopher, M. Ernest Seillière, whose writings have been the subject of considerable comment, has advanced the theory of an Imperialistic Mysticism. He defines Imperialism as the innate tendency of every being, individual or collective, towards aggrandisement and domination, and he considers it the root of other sins. Imperialism is mystic, M. Seillière holds, in the sense that the great imperialists seek support in the supernatural realm, from an unseen Power from whom, in imagination or in reality,

¹ Dan. iv. 30, 31.

² ¹ John ii. 22, 23.

protection, and assistance may be obtained and superhuman strength borrowed, and he adverts to the Christian belief that there is "a mysticism of diabolic origin emanating from a metaphysical Power other than God, the Power of Evil."

It is perhaps interesting to note, in passing, that this theory is current just when human imperialism is about to reach its climax.

Wherein will be the temptation to follow Antichrist rather than Christ, who is still to appear?

There will be the hunger for "a good time" perhaps, with forgetfulness that the fashion of this Age passeth away, and its good times with it. The Lord Jesus, at His First Advent, showed Himself no partisan of gloom and dispiritedness, but it will be necessary to remember, in the times of crisis preceding the end, the object-lesson of Belshazzar's Feast. Some, again, may feel that this Age is such a very good Age to them personally, that they prefer to see no change. Warning in profusion is in the Bible against that point of view. Besides, the best of the Kingdom of this world is as nothing to the least of the things of God's Kingdom. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."¹

Then there may be those who prefer, or think they prefer, the wisdom of this world to the wisdom of God. It has been said that every one is either a Hellenist or a Nazarene, and the cry will probably

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 9.

go forth, as it has before, that Christianity and the highest culture and learning are not compatible. The revival of the Roman political organisation will doubtless be considered to bring with it a Renaissance, comparable to that of former times. Christianity has been alleged by some to be inimical to classic and neo-classic cultivation. They do not understand that, together with the simplicity that is in Christ, there is also the wisdom of God, which is as sunlight to the rushlight of human wisdom. "Where is the wise? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? . . ." ¹

Reformers absorbed in their own endeavours to improve the world are apt to be disturbed—a little "rattled" even—by the suggestion of a sudden divine intervention in human affairs. The truth of the personal return of the Lord Jesus, to bring in times of refreshing through His presence, requires of the social reformer a very great change of mind. After that change is made, there supervenes a sense of utter relief and thankfulness that He who is mighty to save is soon to reform the world.

Again, there are those of a mystic turn whose disposition is rather toward an esoteric form of religion, and the visible, public return of the Lord Jesus is, in a sense, the very antithesis of mysticism, of some sorts. One glorious work of the Lord Jesus Christ is to unveil mystery, to make manifest the things that have been hidden. . . .

¹ 1 Cor. i. 20.

Envy of the Lord Jesus was the essential cause of Satan's fall. Human nature has in it the same seed of envy of the same Jesus. It is the seed that will become a great, strong growth in the heart of Antichrist. The very fact that the Son of God, though knowing Himself to be the equal of God, took upon Himself the form of man and became, like mankind, a partaker of flesh and blood, "that through death He might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil,"¹ has exposed Him to human jealousy. Were He simply a man, differing only in degree from other men, that jealousy could bear, but human jealousy is intolerant of the fact that the Man Christ Jesus is from above, while humanity is from beneath, that we are of this world and He is not of this world, and that the very reason of His incarnation is that it behoved Him to be made like His human brethren, "that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."²

There will be those also who, knowing their own sins, dread the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, not realising that the grace of God has met this difficulty for them.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of

¹ Phil. ii. ; Heb. ii.

² Heb. ii. 17.

God . . . that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”¹

On the strength of that justification, on the basis of the atoning death of Christ, the sinner who is afraid to face Christ may put away his fear because, “this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all men to be accepted, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.”²

Then there are those whose natural pride and conscious rectitude revolt against this plan of justification through the vicarious atonement of Christ. As to conscious rectitude, even in its milder form of a conviction of having done his or her best, must this not be unfavourably contrasted with the humbler, “Lord, be merciful to me a sinner.” And does not this following strike a higher note: “Not mine own righteousness, but that which is through faith in Christ”? Is not this even the righteous man’s noblest plea, “Thy blood was shed for me!”

As for human pride, He that will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax is equally tender of human pride. He Himself takes the humbler place, because it is He who makes the appeal, saying, “Come unto Me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden”—and who is not? “I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”³

After all, the strongest and proudest may feel thankful for the redemption and the protection of “Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again,

¹ Rom. iii. 28–26.

² 1 Tim. i. 15.

³ Matt. xi. 28, 29.

who is even at the right hand of God and maketh intercession for us.”¹ It is well to be of the flock of the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep, and has taken it up again, “Who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification!”²

And with what delicate tact, with what gentleness of consideration, with what self-humbling, our Saviour and God, who already has humbled Himself to death on the shameful Cross, approaches proud hearts: “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock. If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in. . . .”

Christ's victory over the Antichrist and his false god and his false prophet will be complete: those wicked will cease from troubling and the weary be at rest.

The final conflict is predicted with great plainness:

“Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and His anointed—Christ—saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us.”

“Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion,” is God's answer to the rebellious ones, while to Christ He has said, “Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.”³

¹ Rom. viii. 34.

² *Ibid.* iv. 25.

³ Ps. ii. 7, 8.

The Kingdom, rejected at the hands of the Tempter, has been thus conferred by God the Father upon His Son, by that same mighty power "which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead,"¹ as "the first begotten from among the dead,"² saying, "This day have I begotten Thee . . . I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth. . . ."

The divine King of earth has the strength to conquer—but before He does so, He first in His mercy offers an armistice and peace, in these terms :

"Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings, be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little."³

This is the final appeal for surrender to His love rather than to His might, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

Notwithstanding His patience of love, the rebels decide for war.

"And I saw heaven opened ; and behold, a white horse, and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness doth He judge and make war . . . And He hath on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. . . . And I saw the Beast, and the Kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army."⁴

¹ Eph. i. 20.

² Rev. i. 5.

³ Ps. ii. 10-12.

⁴ Rev. xix. 11, 16, 19.

Humanly impossible it would once have seemed to make war against Christ. But scientific advance is encouraging presumption. Do not the scientists warn us that their inventions can be used for good—and also for ill; that these discoveries are putting within human power the most terribly destructive deeds? The Antichrist and his hosts will reckon that science enables them to thwart Christ's purpose to return. That His return is imminent, they will know by every sign of the times. How to prevent it will be their thought. By radio-activity, they will seek to disturb and make impassable the upper atmosphere. Atomic energy, which by then may have become utilisable, will mean, as they think, that the very source of cosmic power is at their service. So they will "make war with the Lamb," but He, the very fount and origin of power, "will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings." And, it is added, for the good Commander gives praise to His armies, "they that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful."

So the great struggle will end, and the peace-breakers and rebels pass from sight and memory.

The age-long prayer will be answered. God's Kingdom will come: His Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

XV

CHRIST'S COMING FOR THE CHURCH

I WILL come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also."

This is the hope of the Church, to be, as all other prophecies have been up to date, realised literally in due time. As the Disciples were the companions of the Lord in the days of His First Advent, so the Church—those who have been His disciples in this intervening period—will be His companions when He returns. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."¹

Hence the revelation given through the Apostle, who says :

"Behold, I show you a mystery : we shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed."²

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."³

His summons will bring His disciples to Him, those that were dead being "raised incorruptible," and those that are alive being "changed," and all being "caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." Before men could fly, before they had invented that "impossibility,"

¹ Col. iii. 4.

² 1 Cor. xv. 51.

³ 1 Thess. iv. 16.

the heavier-than-air flying machine, human reason stumbled at this idea of the disciples, the Church of Christ, meeting Him in the air. But since the "impossible" has happened, since the "law" of gravitation has been overruled, since mankind has conquered the air—the "incredible" of the Lord Jesus Christ raising His followers to meet Him in the air is seen to be perfectly credible, feasible, and accordant with the nature of things.

The Aerial Epoch has already begun! The air has an importance now that in itself is a very sign of the times. Man is obtaining the freedom of the air in such a degree that the next war, as all agree, will be fought mainly in the air.

Satan is entitled "the Prince of the power of the air."¹

Christ is to meet His Church in the air. Christ, when in company with His Church, previously called away, He appears to the world, will be seen coming through the air.

The air, then, is to be the scene of momentous happenings, and the present conquest of the air is a preliminary to, and a portent of, those happenings. . . .

Only His followers saw the Lord Jesus after His resurrection. On one occasion He was "seen of above five hundred brethren at once," of whom, at the time when the Apostle spoke, "the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."²

So it will be when, as He has promised, He comes again and receives His followers to Himself. Only

¹ Eph. ii. 2.

² 1 Cor. xv. 6.

they will see Him then. As an analogy, we may think of those wearing eye-phones or ear-phones, who can see and hear things of which others are quite unaware. Only His disciples will see Him when He comes for them. Afterwards, when He reappears to the world, for the first time since He was taken down from the Cross, He will be seen by every eye and throughout the world.

Radio-vision is already a fact, and soon will enable spectators all round the globe to watch (as they will also hear) the proceedings in University lecture-rooms, or lawn-tennis at Wimbledon, or the opening of Parliament, or the crowning of a human king, or the enacting of a revolution or military *coup d'état*. Radio-communication incidentally introduces another time-reckoning into human affairs.

But radio-vision and audition, their method and paraphernalia, wonderful as they are from the human standpoint, are crude in the extreme, compared to the vision and audition which Christ will Himself impart especially to His Church, but later and in large measure to the world, when He comes again. . . .

Now that it is scientifically admitted that the whole Creation is a manifestation of energy, there is not the old difficulty in understanding the predicted resurrection and transfiguration of His disciples—their endowment with a body “fashioned like unto His glorious body.”¹

The body, after as before its great change, will owe its existence to Christ's creative energy. He

¹ Phil. iii. 21.

can create, restore, transfigure a body at His will. All things are made through Him, and without Him is not anything made. . . .

The most extraordinary human achievements are being predicted. One man of science writes : "What is to prevent the transference of the conception of matter and of our mentality from one planet to another ? If matter is the result of defined electric vibration, could we not transfer our tables, our chairs, and *ourselves in effect* by a knowledge of the forces which produce these oscillations ?"

Cannot the Lord Jesus Christ much more revive, transfigure, and translate His disciples and meet them in the air ?

Did the Apostles renounce their belief in the Second Advent ? Not at all. They every one preached it. They hoped that He would return in their lifetime ; they knew that, if not, He would come afterward.

The last words of St. Paul were of the Second Advent :

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of departure is at hand. Henceforth is laid up a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that LOVE HIS APPEARING." ¹

What more sacred assurance of His coming and of belief in His coming than this :

"As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death *till He come* !" ²

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 6-8.

² 1 Cor. xi. 26.

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When He comes, the troubles of the Church will be ended—the weakness, the dissension, the failings, together with the sorrows and trials and the present warfare against the spiritual hosts of evil. The triumph of the Church will be when, and not before, her Founder and Lord returns. Then the Church will lose the present defects and the marks of old age, and will be transformed into “a glorious Church, not having wrinkle or spot or any such thing . . . holy and without blemish.”¹

It ill becomes the world to accuse the Church of having failed, for the Church is the best thing on earth. Nevertheless this is the Church's age of imperfection. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be,” says John, “but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.” How Paul groaned for the adoption—to wit, the redemption—of the body, for the full and final liberation from the present body of humiliation, which will come with the coming of the Lord.

Meanwhile, the heralding of the Lord's return is the most potent evangelism. The peoples are wondering what is wrong with the world. That is the Church's opportunity to preach the return of the Crucified One. The younger generation, especially, wishes to look forward, not backward, and the danger is of their thinking that Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, has been left far behind in the march of history. But if He is coming back again then, evidently, He is not of the past only, but also of the future—“the same yesterday,

¹ Eph. v. 27.

to-day, and for ever"—and the world is not moving away from the time of Christ, so much as marching towards Him and the time when He shall appear still crucified, but in His irresistible power.

Again, this is the period of social consciousness. People are concerned with the Kingdom of God on earth as well as in heaven. Shall it be said that they are in the wrong, seeing that the Lord Jesus Himself declared that men should pray: "Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"?

From the continuance of world evils during this Christian era, non-Christians have argued not only the "failure of Christianity" but also the indifference of God to these evils, and even His deliberate sanction thereof. Thousands have become Atheists because of their want of knowledge that satanic rebellion is at the bottom of world evils, and that the Lord Jesus Christ is coming a second time to overcome this rebellion and to establish His own righteous and peaceful reign.

The Church to-day, in seeking to establish the truth of Christianity, cannot do better than take a leaf out of Bishop Butler's *Analogy*. He advances "the completion of prophecy" as one of the direct and fundamental proofs of Christianity. Prophecy, in his view, is nothing but the history of events before they come to pass.

"So much of prophecy has been verified already," Butler maintains, that this "naturally turns the thoughts of serious men towards the full completion of the prophetic history concerning the final restoration of the Jewish people; con-

cerning the establishment of the everlasting Kingdom of the Messiah ; and the future state of the world under His sacred government."

Its fulfilment of recorded prophecy, as external evidence of its truth, was, it is said, a main factor in the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity.¹ The same evidence is powerful to-day, when brought home to the human mind and heart. In pursuance of her duty to "Preach the Gospel to every creature," the Church is bound, in this time of crisis, to preach the Second Advent as part of the Gospel and as an incentive to the world to accept the Gospel as a whole.

"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," was the herald-cry of John, and before the Incarnation there were those who looked and prayed for His coming who should be the Consolation and Redemption of Israel.

Similarly the Church, the body of Christ, cannot but long, cannot but pray, for the coming of Him who is the Head, that where He is, the Church may also be.

¹ Merivale's *Conversion of the Roman Empire*.

XVI

CHRIST'S RETURN TO THE WORLD

IN a far-western city in the United States some good Samaritan has affixed this notice, high above a main thoroughfare :

JESUS IS COMING !

This reminder, "good tidings of great joy," lightens the heart every time it is seen. A sovereign dispeller of gloom is that little black-and-white message—JESUS IS COMING !

And it really is true ! The evidence is mounting up. Sign is added to sign. The most incredulous are constrained to admit that there is, perhaps, something in it. Or, if not, one can assure them that a seed of prophetic truth has been planted in their mind by their reading of this book or any other on the same lines. The seed will grow, until they will find themselves watching the Signs of the Times and inwardly wondering whether these do, after all, announce the visible return and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sooner or later the whole world will become

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convinced that He is to return. Some see it before others: that is the difference. Again, some rejoice, and others, it appears, do not—though why any should not rejoice is a mystery, seeing that the returning Christ Jesus so deeply loves the human race.

The great Tribulation predicted to precede His coming will be due to rebellion against Him, and could be averted even now by universal acceptance of Him.

Let us recall His own personal assurances that He will return. We must set aside the feeble theory that depicts Jesus as a young visionary who first thought one thing and then thought another respecting His Messianic destiny. By deed as well as word He proclaimed Himself Messiah, the divine and Davidic King whose Kingdom, centred in Palestine, comprehends the whole earth.

Recall first His royal if humble entry into Jerusalem, to the cry:

“Blessed is the Kingdom that cometh, the Kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest!”¹

Hailed as King-Messiah, the Heir to the throne of David, the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem, just as the prophet had long since written that He would, in these prophetic words:

“Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt, the foal of an ass.”²

¹ Mark xi. 1-11 (R.V.).

² Zech. ix. 9.

The same Old Testament prophet who thus described this first State Entry of King-Messiah into Jerusalem has also foretold the second coming of King-Messiah and developments to occur between these two events. He has told of the final crisis of this Age when King-Messiah shall vanquish those who persist in opposing Him. Still more wonderful is the announcement that "they shall look upon Me whom they pierced"; also the prophet tells us, "His feet shall stand at that day upon the Mount of Olives"; "The Lord my God shall come."

The same prophet tells further how: "The Lord shall be King over the whole earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name One." And how every one that is left of the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts.

When King Jesus sent for and mounted that ass's colt, and rode upon its back into Jerusalem, He thereby declared Himself to be this divine King who, as the prophet had foretold, would be pierced, and afterward would come again to rule and be worshipped by the nations of the earth.

Teaching in the Temple, King Jesus maintained that He was no merely human King. For He asked why the scribes should say that Messiah is simply and solely the *human* descendant of David, seeing that "David¹ himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."² Messiah is David's God in addition to

¹ Mark xii. 35-37.

² Ps. cx.

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being his heir by human descent. Jesus is Davidic by descent through Mary, His Mother, but divine through His unique Sonship of God.

Now we come to the solemn presentment which He gave to His disciples of the things to happen in the years following His departure and onward to the end of this Age and His return.

The Temple destroyed, false Christs deceiving many, wars and rumours of wars, earthquakes, famine and pestilence, persecution of those faithful to Himself, the world-wide publishing of the Gospel, the prophet Daniel's sayings verified by the event, a culminating Tribulation, again false Christs and false prophets showing signs and wonders such as would seduce, if it were possible, even the elect, the very sun and moon and stars and celestial forces disordered—"And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with great power and glory."¹ Only God could thus come in the heavens. Signs and wonders may, and will, be shown by false Christs and false prophets, but not *that wonder*! And even if it were possible to them, there is only One who is both crucified and crowned, only One who will appear in the heavens bearing both the wounds of the Cross and the name written, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

In that manner it is that Christ will come to the world.

¹ Mark xiii. 26.

XVII

HOW PROPHECY IS POSSIBLE

BECAUSE it actually "comes true," we know that biblical prediction is possible. Modern Science is arriving at an understanding of how it is possible for God to predict the future. Events, we are told, are "laid out in space." One writer expresses it thus :

"Past, present, and future are not real distinctions. Events are no more successive than things in space, and if we are to define the term 'now,' we cannot stop short of the entire history of the universe. . . . Past and future are not distinctions in reality, but only in our minds."

God, who is superior to unreal distinctions, beholds the *now* of universal history. He sees and He "declares the end from the beginning."¹

"In divining the future," goes another statement of the same idea, "the events are located not in one place, still less in no place at all, but in the place where they will occur, however inaccurately we may apprehend their positions."

In his *Space, Time, and Gravitation*, Professor A. S. Eddington, Plumian Professor of Astronomy and Philosophy at Cambridge, says :

"In a perfectly determinate scheme, the past and future may be regarded as lying mapped out

¹ Isa. xli. 10.

—as much available to present exploration as the distant parts of space. Events do not happen; they are just there, and we come across them. 'The formality of taking place' is merely the indication that the observer has, on his voyage of exploration, passed into the absolute future of the event in question; and it has no important significance." Professor Eddington further says that "if events are determinate, there is nothing to prevent a person from being *aware of an event before it happens.*"

Let us note that term, "the observer." Here is the clue to the mystery, to-day not so very mysterious, of prophecy. When God is the Observer, He sees and He says inerrantly what the future is.

From His supreme position in the Universe, from His all-commanding viewpoint He observes the things to come, all spread out before Him. And that majestic panorama He lets us see with the eyes of His prophets—through them "declaring from ancient times the things that are not yet done."¹

A great difference there is between the divine predictions given in the Bible and other predictions which, we may be told, are found elsewhere. The human, non-biblical predictions are of shorter range and are narrower in scope. If really predictive, they can be attributed only to some partial glimpse of "events laid out in space," which (as we have been assured in the words quoted above) are there to be seen, if we could see them. But such scanty, pin-hole peeps at futurity are not

¹ Isa. xlii. 10.

to be confounded with the grand vision of universal destiny which God in His predictions is pleased to reveal. And there is something more that marks off God's prophecies from anything that human seers claim to descry, and it is that God when He tells the future is declaring His own will and purpose, as the Creator and Lord of all. "For I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure! I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I also will do it!*"¹

In biblical prophecy the march of the human race is foreshown to us. The history of the Jews, and intertwined with it the history of the Gentiles, is there prewritten.

Christ Jesus—the keynote, the very theme of the Bible—His divine career is traced from before the world was, to Incarnation, through death to resurrection and ascension, through this present era of His withdrawal from human sight, and on to the time, now very near, when He shall gather in His Church, return as Messiah to the Jews and to all nations as Judge and King; onward through the Millennial Era; past the crisis in which that era closes, and into the eternity of perfect harmony and righteousness which lies beyond: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . . And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."²

¹ Isa. xlv. 10, 11.

² Rev. xxi. 1, 23.

The practical point to be again noticed here is that this long sequence of prophecy has been fulfilled step by step up to this very day.

It really is true that "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known what shall be in the latter days."

To be wise in their own conceits is a weakness to which first-rate minds are unfortunately liable. Hence their too general neglect of biblical prophecy. But when they do make serious study of prophecy and its fulfilment they discover its supreme interest and importance. The human intellect can have no finer exercise than this, can enter no field more fruitful of highest value.

Powerful thinkers have applied themselves to the discovery of what are termed the laws of nature and the reign of law in the Universe. Will they not, even now, watch the Lawgiver's prophetic word in process of being translated into history? Will they not observe events fitting into the tableau traced by prophecy? "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God Himself that formed the earth . . . who have told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? and there is no god else beside Me, a just God and a Saviour."¹

A melancholy thing it is that, although they have bent great minds to concerns so much less important than prophecy fulfilled and all the mighty truths therein implicit, the wise men of this world have been prone to shy at the very mention of biblical prophecy. They will study profoundly and minutely, they will write volumin-

¹ Isa. xlv. 18, 21.

ously upon pagan myths, and indeed any and every aspect of all things, past, present, or future, rather than ask and answer this question :

(a) Has biblical prophecy been fulfilled in past history ?

(b) Is it being fulfilled in present-day events ?

(c) Is there consequently reason to believe that such fulfilment will be continued in the future until all be fulfilled ?

(d) What are we to conclude as to the divine authorship of a Book which has so accurately foretold things future ?

(e) What are we to believe respecting the Lord Jesus Christ, the God, Saviour, and King who is predicted and portrayed in this Book ?

Other times, other manners, and the neglect of this great subject by learned men in past and intellectually darker days will not be maintained. The Signs of the Times cannot much longer be ignored. The questing modern mind will seek to discern them. The Future is a province which modern science will strive to conquer ; and the Bible, which has already, so to say, explored and reported upon the future, will win students drawn from the ranks of science. Political persons, too, are among those who will take to studying prophecy. They will turn at last, in very desperation, to this one and only guide to the things that are coming upon the earth, making the politician's heart to fail.

Mark this once again ! The day is very near when everybody on earth will understand and know with certainty that the Lord Jesus Christ

is coming, and coming soon. Why, the Antichrist himself will know it !

Then the division will be not between believers and non-believers in the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but between those who love His appearing and those who hate and would prevent His appearing. "These shall war against the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them : for He is Lord of lords and King of kings." ¹

To be for Christ—that is the important thing. A great conflict is about to end. In this, its closing phase, why should not all be on His side, as He challenges sin in the human hearts and in the world, and the supernatural principalities and powers of evil ? Now, as He is about to appear in victory, as once He appeared before in what the world regarded as defeat, prophecy gives the call to preparation : it raises the issue, "Who is on the Lord's side ?"

¹ Rev. xvii. 14 (R.V.).

XVIII

PROPHECY VIEWED BY GREAT THINKERS

IF the folly of the wise has caused their too general neglect of biblical prophecy, yet some of the most original and powerful minds have been convinced of its validity. Francis Bacon, for instance, showed his respect for prophecy when he wrote in the *Advancement of Learning* : ¹

“The history of prophecy consists of two relatives—the prophecy and the accomplishment, whence the nature of it requires that every Scripture prophecy be compared with the event, through all the Ages of the world, for the better confirmation of the faith, and the better information of the Church with regard to the interpretation of prophecies not yet fulfilled. But here we must allow the latitude which is peculiar and familiar to divine prophecies, which have their fulfilment not only at stated times, but in succession, as participating of the nature of their divine Author ‘with whom a thousand years are but as one day,’ and therefore are not fulfilled punctually at once, but have a growing accomplishment through many Ages, though the height and fulness of them may refer to a single Age or moment.”

That there should be more thorough study of prophecy as it is fulfilled in history, was Bacon’s opinion, expressed thus :

“This is a work which I find deficient; but it

¹ Book II, chap. ii.

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should be undertaken with wisdom, sobriety, and reverence, or not at all."

Sir Isaac Newton's belief in biblical prophecy, partly fulfilled by past history, and to be completely fulfilled in the future, is noticed in an earlier chapter. As the Age-end approaches, such was his opinion, prophecy will be so far interpreted by events as to convince many. "The event of things prophesied many years ago will then," he wrote, "be a convincing argument that the world is governed by Providence." World happenings, he maintained, will "prove the Apocalypse; and this prophecy, thus proved, will open the Old Prophets, and all together will make known the true religion and establish it." He added :

"There is already so much of the prophecy fulfilled that as many as will take the pains may see sufficient evidences of God's providence, *but then, the signal revolutions predicted by all the holy Prophets will at once both turn men's eyes upon considering the predictions and plainly interpret them.*"

Another man of genius, Pascal, was likewise intellectually conquered by the verities of prophecy fulfilled. His mathematical mind seized firmly the identity of prophecy, and the historic events that had so far confirmed it. Scientist as he was, his Christianity was founded largely upon the scientific basis of prophecy which God has given it.

"The sun is not clearer at noonday," he held, than the description which the biblical prophets have given of the state of the world in a time future to their own day.

"The noblest evidences of our Lord are the prophecies that preceded Him," says Pascal, and, to his mathematical mind this reflection occurs. Supposing one single man to have left a book of predictions concerning Jesus Christ, and suppose Him to have come in accordance with these predictions, "the argument would be of almost infinite force." Yet, here, the argument is stronger beyond all comparison: because a succession of prophets foretold the same event.

"Who," exclaims Pascal, "is so ignorant as not to distinguish and acknowledge our Lord after the numerous prophetic circumstances of His history?" and he proceeds to show that all the facts of the First Advent were foretold by the Old Testament prophets. He then maintains that "the same prophecies which represent our Lord as under poverty and contempt"—and in that respect have been fulfilled—"describe Him likewise as the Prince and Master of the world," and "represent Him in glory and judging the nations," show Him appearing in "public, surprising, illustrious" fashion, "visible to His greatest enemies" as well as to His friends.

In later times, Lord Shaftesbury publicly declared his belief that the Lord Jesus would at no very distant date return to set up a new world-order.

Finally, we may mention the testimony of the statesman, W. E. Gladstone, who, in an editorial note to his edition of Butler's *Analogy*, says that, "Prophecy seems to imply the action of divine power operating with large combinations, such as belong to the government of the Ages as a whole."

XIX

THE "LAWS OF NATURE" AND THE SECOND ADVENT

"CONTRARY to the laws of Nature is the return of Christ," object some who remember things they read a good long time ago.

But, according to the scientists of to-day, dogmatism about the laws of Nature is obsolete. They have found "nature" breaking her own supposed "laws" in such a remarkable fashion! They condemn such dogmatism as a hindrance to the growth of knowledge. "Impossible," "incredible," and "contrary to Nature's laws" are expressions that have been erased from their vocabulary.

"The physical impossibility of one era becomes the commonplace of the next," declares Professor Soddy.¹ He adds: "Had any one twenty-five years ago ventured to predict radium, he would have been told simply that such a thing was not only improbable, but actually opposed to all the established principles of the science of matter and energy."

The superstitious reverence for the so-called

¹ *The Interpretation of Radium and the Structure of the Atom*, by Frederick Soddy, Professor of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry, Oxford.

"laws of Nature" is foreign to the scientific mind. Scientists explain to us that they mean by a "natural law" merely their own account, their own summing up of behaviour or activity in the animate or inanimate world, so far as they have been able to observe it up to date. Trenchantly does Professor J. Y. Simpson¹ express himself on the subject :

"The progress of science may be hindered when the so-called laws of nature are worked up into a philosophy. . . ."

This further warning should be noticed :

"Any belief in the immutability of natural law transcends experience, and it may very easily be as much a retarding as a helpful attitude *to assume dogmatically that the unknown is governed only by the same laws as the known.*"

Persons who confuse and confound "laws of Nature," which are simply the scientists' generalisations, with mandates and prohibitions of the kind that appear on the national Statute Book, are the very ones who are inclined to doubt the existence of the divine Lawgiver. As though there could be any law, properly so-called, without a lawgiver !

Even if they admit a divine Lawgiver, they would have Him in bondage, like Darius, to His own Laws. "Know, O King, that the law of the Medes and Persians is that no decree nor statute which the King establisheth may be changed."²

¹ Professor of Natural Science, New College, Edinburgh.

² Dan. vi. 15.

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They are shocked by the very suggestion that our God will at His own time, impose upon Nature a new method of behaviour, will, in other words, change His present mode of dealing with the world and its inhabitants.

The curious thing is that, just as God is preparing to make the great new departure foretold in prophecy, scientists are becoming aware from their own observation that "natural law" *is not unchanging and unchangeable*. We get some inkling of this from Professor Simpson, who says :

"All consideration of the subject of natural law confirms its *wholly provisional character*. The astronomer continually notices changes in the heavens, *e.g.* in the brilliance and arrangement of the stars, which may even *suggest the idea of variability in the laws of nature themselves . . .* we are in no position to maintain that their immutability is absolute. The absolute fixity attributed to them may be relative and contingent only. There may be development. Not merely may more complex relationships be in process of development during the æons, involving modifications in those statements known as laws, *but new ones may come to light and into being.*"

Exactly as we read in the Bible, "Behold, I will do a new thing!"¹

¹ Isa. xliii. 19.

XX

THE PROBLEM OF ADVENT AND APPEARANCE

“**H**OW can Christ travel from heaven in the short time which the Advent doctrine requires ? ”

“How is it possible for every eye to see Him when He appears : When He is seen in Jerusalem, how can He be seen also at the Antipodes ? ”

It would be enough to reply, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” ¹

But thanks to the fulfilment of the prophecy that in the time of the end “Knowledge shall be increased,” ² Science gives us an inkling of what may be the divine method of advent and appearance.

Light travels, the physicists long since told us all, at the speed of 186,000 miles a second, so that, though a ray of light takes only eight minutes eighteen seconds to travel from the sun to the earth, it takes a prodigious time to travel from one of the most distant stars.

Assuming for a moment that heaven be equally remote, a journey from heaven to earth begun to-day, and made at the speed of light, could not

¹ Luke xviii. 27.

² Dan. xii. 4.

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be completed within the lifetime of any person living now on earth. We might parry this argument by remarking that, in the economy of the atom, an electron can change from one orbit to another orbit without traversing the space between the orbits; for such is the affirmation of physical science, based upon experiment. If an electron can perform this wonderful feat, He who is its Creator can conquer space in a corresponding manner.

We will, however, face the problem as stated by our objector, "How can Christ travel across the distance between heaven and earth in the time required by the Advent doctrine?" He cannot do this, if heaven is as distant as the remotest star, *unless He travels at a speed greater than that of light*. But if His speed is sufficiently greater than light-speed, He will accomplish the journey within the time required.

Can light itself travel faster than its allowance of 186,000 miles? It can go slower than this, as scientists admit, when they say not only that "light moves more slowly in a material medium than in a vacuum," but that "the velocity of light diminishes as we approach the sun: when the light-waves pass near the sun, the end nearest the sun has the smallest velocity." Shall we ever be told that light can in certain conditions exceed its 186,000 miles a second? Perhaps not, but something other than light may do so. Some new kind of ray with a higher speed than light is admittedly possible, even if as yet undiscovered. This passage from Professor Eddington is pertinent here:

“ ‘Mr. Speaker,’ said Sir Boyle Roche, ‘not being a bird, I could not be in two places at once.’ Any entity with a speed greater than light would have the peculiarity of Sir Boyle Roche’s bird. It can scarcely be said to be a self-contradictory property to be in *two places* at the *same time*, any more than for an object to be at *two times* in the *same place*. The perplexities of the quantum theory of energy sometimes seem to suggest that the possibility ought not to be overlooked, but, on the whole, the evidence seems to be against the existence of anything moving with a speed beyond that of light.”

This last saying may be very true, though in these days of scientific innovating, even light itself might be suspected of claiming re-valuation as to its possibility of speed in certain conditions. And though we should certainly suppose that light will prove to have the highest speed of any *created* thing, still there is no knowing but that some speedier thing will yet be discovered by those wonderful scientific inquirers !

The *Creator’s* speed it is, however, that concerns us here. The true Light—what is His speed ?

Finite speed is that of light.

Infinite speed is that of the Light !

The only light now known to mankind by experience is a created, a derivative light, travelling with its limited velocity.

Christ, the original, uncreated Light, will, when He returns, travel at His own absolute velocity.

He will also be seen in and by His own light.

That is why He will be simultaneously visible at Jerusalem and the Antipodes. Already, even

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human beings, by their own inferior expedients, can make themselves seen all over the globe. They can artificially generate electro-magnetic rays making world-wide vision possible. So much the more can the Lord Jesus Christ, by His own rays, be visible to every eye at the same time throughout the wide world, when He returns.

X X I

HEAVEN AS A PLACE

“**H**EAVEN is not a place, and therefore Jesus cannot be in that place nor return from it.” So say many people, thinking that they have raised a scientific objection. But the new Science cannot affirm that heaven is not a place. To begin with: “Science uncompromisingly rejects the proposition that that which no one observes does not exist.”¹

The notion that the Bible has erred, that the Lord Jesus has erred in representing heaven as a place, is a notion that is false. It arose before Science had learnt to say: “It has been necessary to give up the reality of the everyday world of three dimensions.”¹ Heaven may be in a dimension which is not fully explored, or in one not at all explored by science. For science already ventures to speak hypothetically of five or more dimensions. A little while ago the scientists recognised only three dimensions. Some non-scientific folk are still stuck fast in that position. He who questions the four-dimensional teaching of the physicists is thus answered by Professor Eddington:

“We must bear in mind that our questioner has probably an ulterior motive. He has already a

¹ Professor Eddington, *Space, Time, and Gravitation*.

belief in a real world of three Euclidean dimensions, and he hopes to be allowed to continue in this belief undisturbed. In that case our reply must be definite: The real three-dimensional world is obsolete. It must be replaced by four-dimensional space time with non-Euclidean properties. The four-dimensional world is no sure illustration. It is the real world of physics arrived at in the recognised way in which physics has always (rightly or wrongly) sought for reality. It has been necessary to give up the everyday world of three dimensions. Until recently it comprised all the possible appearances that had been considered, but now it has been discovered that there are new points of view with new appearances, and the reality must contain them all."

The implications of four-dimensional reality are not yet fully understood, and they may well account for heaven as a place not yet known to physical science.

Theoretically four-dimensionalism would permit a body to enter a completely closed room by travelling into it in the direction of the fourth dimension just as we may bring a pencil down on to any point within a square without crossing its sides. This recalls: "And when the doors were shut where the disciples were . . . Jesus came, and stood in the midst of them."¹

But the search for heaven as a place is not limited to four dimensions, since scientists decline to assert that the fourth is the final dimension.

How do scientists regard a, to them, new dimension? As the bringing into consideration of the point of view of another observer! "Is not the

¹ John xx. 19.

real world," says Professor Eddington, "that which comprehends the appearances to all real observers?" He asks: "Have the points of view of all conceivable observers now been absorbed? *We do not assert that they have.* But it seems as though a definite task has been rounded off and a natural halting-place reached."

Yet as this powerful thinker will be the first to say, Science is never content to halt for long. To his inquiry, "Is it necessary to take into account all conceivable observers?" the answer evidently is: Yes! There is still one other observer's point of view which is indispensable to reality—and that Observer is God. Jesus Christ, who is God, knows not only three- or four-dimensional reality: He knows *all-dimensional* reality. He is the Absolute Observer who spoke with authority, because with perfect knowledge, when He said that from the place called heaven, to which He has gone to prepare a place for His followers, He will come again. And assuredly He spoke of a place when He made such statements as these:

"I am come down from heaven."¹

"No one hath ascended into heaven but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man."²

Perhaps the reason why we can at present see nothing of the place called heaven is simply this—the absorption of light in space. Astronomers speak of vast tracts of absorbing matter³ which

¹ John vi. 38.

² *Ibid.* iii. 13.

³ See *Stellar Movements and the Structure of the Universe*, by A. S. Eddington, p. 33.

cut off the light of the stars behind. These are to be found in the Milky Way and also probably among the central aggregation of stars in which our Sun is supposed to hold a fairly central position. One of these "specially opaque regions" may intercept our view of heaven. If that be so, the rending of this opacity would open heaven to our view. "Verily, verily, I say unto you: Ye shall see the heaven opened."¹

Is this what John prophetically described as "a door opened in heaven"?² Can it be the rending of the astronomers' "opaque material" which will disclose the "Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power and coming in the clouds of heaven"?³ One is reminded of the *Veil* in Scripture. The Temple had its inner and outer veils, and heaven may be likewise veiled. Are we not reminded of the congregation waiting at the entrance, and the appearing of Aaron and his sons, types of Christ and His Church? Here on earth there are shadows and patterns of heavenly things. "As Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle: for, See, saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the Mount."⁴ . . . For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, by His own blood, now to appear in the presence of God for us."⁵

If we do not know how He will come, nor where His heaven is (and, after all, it concerns us not so

¹ John i. 51.

² Rev. iv. 1.

³ Matt. xxvi. 64.

⁴ Heb. viii. 5.

⁵ *Ibid.* ix. 24.

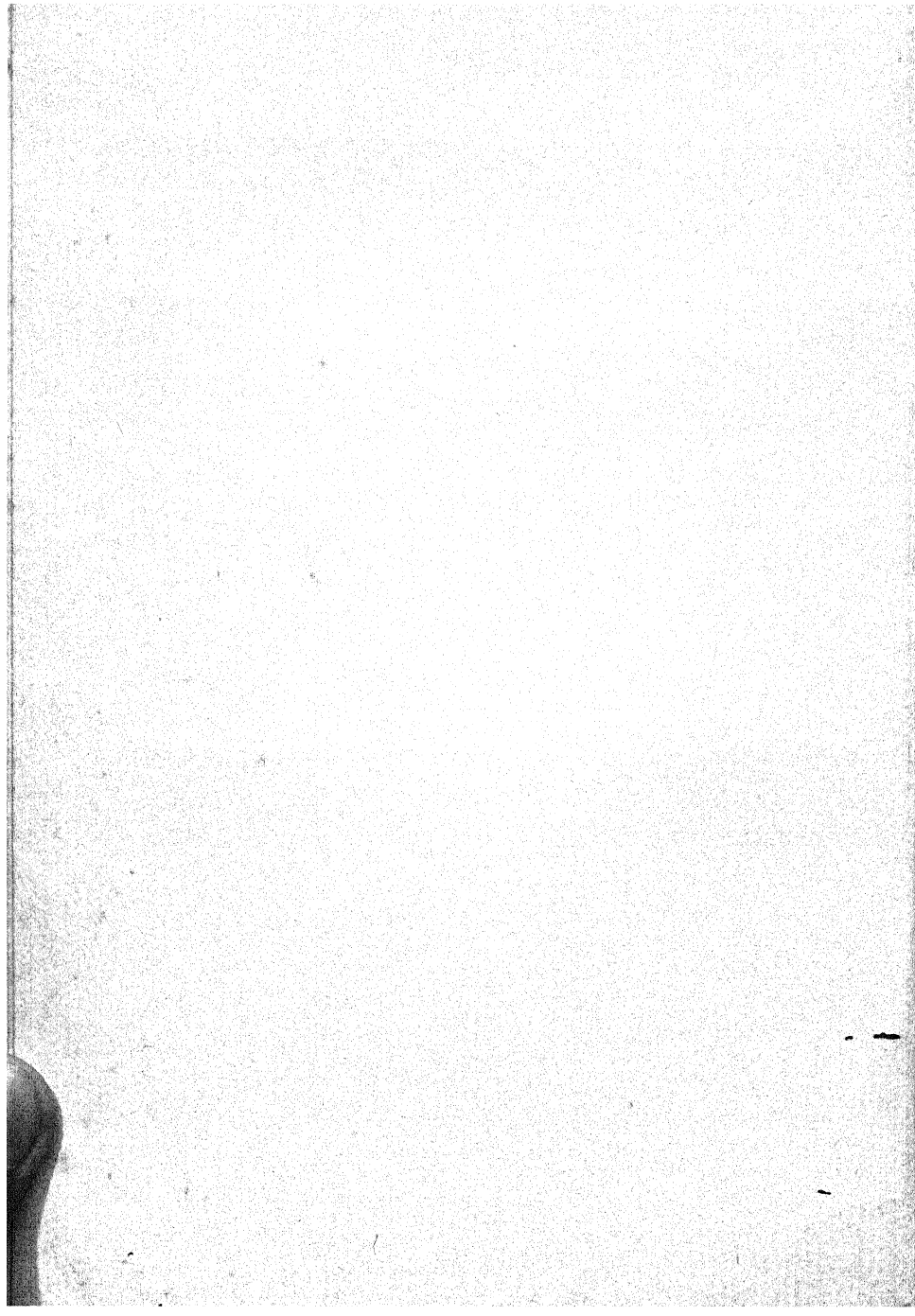
much *how* He will come as that He *will* come), that is because, despite recent advance, human knowledge of the nature of things is still "only an empty shell," as scientists admit. We see, as yet, but "the outskirts of His ways."¹ Meanwhile we have the certainty, because He has said it, that the world shall see Him "coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory."²

¹ Job xxvi. 14 (R.V.).

² Matt. xxiv. 30.

PART III

SOME ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS



XXII

EARTH AS THE SCENE OF THE ADVENTS

THAT it exaggerates the Earth's importance is the objection made by some to the doctrine of the Lord's return hither to reign. "How can this little planet and the human beings on it count for so much," they ask, "considering the multitude of other heavenly bodies and the vastly greater size of so many of them? Even in the Solar System there are planets bigger than Earth, and our Sun itself is but a pigmy compared with numbers of other Suns." That might seem a difficulty from the standpoint of physical science had not science itself supplied a reply. It has done so by showing that there is no such difference between Earth and other heavenly bodies as the non-scientific observers assume. Distant stars may be far bigger than earth and yet far more *unsubstantial*.

The author of *Astronomical Physics*¹ informs us that there are very good reasons for believing that the masses of stars all fall within a fairly narrow range. It is density and superficial area that differ. There are stars whose diameter is vastly greater than the Sun, but are unimaginably unsubstantial.

¹ F. J. M. Stratton.

Another authority writes :

"To us, observing from a distance of four hundred light years, Antares appears as a vast mass of glowing material, yet how strange this seems when we realise that our astronomical calculations show that this star must be more than a thousand times rarer than the air we breathe. On the earth we should consider such a state of affairs a vacuum. In the endless and empty spaces of the sidereal universe it is considered a point where matter is particularly concentrated, and we call it a star."¹

Aldebaran is formed of gases "lighter than hydrogen, and its substance is 900 times less dense than air at normal pressure." Who will assert that such vacuous if expansive stars are necessarily higher in the scale of importance than our own more substantial Sun? And so with the Earth. Smaller than the widespreading stars, smaller than our Sun, smaller than some other planets, but so much more dense, and also, if we can judge of the matter, more habitable!

"On the one hand, we have comparatively small bodies like the Earth; and on the other we have bodies of enormous size. The former have a high density represented on the average by the figure 5, and the latter a low density averaging 1.26, and in this respect offer a closer resemblance to the Sun. The small density of the larger planets indicates a gaseous constitution and a high temperature."²

Broadly speaking, then, the heavenly bodies are much of a muchness as to mass, those that are

¹ Mr. William J. Leyton of Harvard University.

² *Astronomy To-day*, by Abbé Moreux.

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popularly accounted bigger being far less dense, and the others, such as Earth, that are accounted smaller, being much more dense.

As touching Earth's status in the Universe, the much discussed views of Jeans¹ are of great interest. Having traced what he thinks may be the way of the stars' development from an original nebulosity, he declares that the origin of our own Solar System cannot be accounted for in the same way, saying :

"If the whole aim of cosmogony were to discover the origin of our own Solar System, our labour would have been in vain. . . . Laplace's conception has been amazingly fruitful. It would hardly be too much to say that it has revealed or given a valuable clue to the origin of every normal formation in the sky, with the single exception of the Solar System, which it set out to seek."

"*But is the Solar System a normal system?*" Jeans then inquires, and then answers that, in his opinion, some exceptional cause has made the Solar System one which is rare and *possibly unique*.

Our astronomer thinks it possible, even if improbable, that the Earth is the only body in the whole Universe which is capable of sustaining life, and adds :

"We begin to suspect that life is not the normal accompaniment of a Sun, since planets capable of sustaining life *are not the normal accompaniment of Suns*. Astronomy does not know whether or not life is important in the scheme of Nature, but she begins to whisper that it must be extremely rare. Her suggestions, though still vague, seem

¹ *The Nebular Hypothesis and Modern Cosmogony.*

to indicate that our terrestrial life forms a greater proportion of the sum-total of the life of the Universe than we at one time thought."

Earth, therefore, holds no mean place in the Solar System, nor in the Universe at large !

As habitable by incarnate beings, Earth may very likely be unique.

Earth's more or less *central position* among the heavenly bodies is the conjecture of astronomers. "We look out upon the Universe from a more or less central point of view." ¹

In such ways does science help us to see why the Earth should be the chosen scene of the incarnation of Christ Jesus, in whom is embodied all the fulness of the Godhead, of His atoning death, burial, and resurrection, and of His return and reign. Earth is "no mean city," no hole-and-corner, negligible planet, but, all things considered, the appropriate stage for the enactment of that true and mighty drama of the Ages, of which Christ Jesus is the heroic, central figure.

Also, Earth is the home of sin and the place of need ; and that would bring to it the Son of God in redemptive love, if it were the least and last corner of the Universe.

Again, Earth is the principality appointed to Satan before his fall, and, therefore, here the reduction of this Rebel had to be begun and ended.

¹ *Astronomy To-day*, by Abbé Moreux.

XXIII

AN ANTHROPOMORPHIC GOD

“**A**N anthropomorphic God is an impossibility, and consequently there can be no return of the man Christ Jesus in divine majesty.” This argument belongs to a superannuated scepticism which feebly lingers on in some minds.

God is anthropomorphic because God the Son is incarnate—“And was made in the likeness of men.”¹

Answering the question, “Where, then, is your Designer of beasts and birds, of fishes and of plants?” Butler says :

“Our answer is simple enough ; it is that we can and do point to a living, tangible Person with flesh, blood, eyes, nose, ears, organs, senses, dimensions, who did of his own cunning, after infinite proof of every kind of hazard and experiment, scheme out and fashion each organ of the human body. This is the Person whom we claim as the designer and artificer of that body, and he is the one of all others the best fitted for that task by his antecedents and his practical knowledge of the requirements of the case—for he is man himself, not man, the individual of any given generation, but man in the entirety of his existence, from the dawn of life onwards to the present moment.”

¹ Phil. ii. 7.

Jesus, Son of God, is the real, the proper, man—man Alpha and man Omega. Though He “was manifested at the end of the times for your sake,” as the Apostle says, He “yet was foreknown before the foundation of the world.”¹

From the beginning, in divine contemplation, God was man in Christ Jesus—always Anthropomorphic. Also man was in divine purpose Theomorphic—“Let us make man in our own image.” That purposed image is defaced by sin, but it can be impressed anew, and more gloriously than ever, through the re-creative work of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this re-creation of men in the image of God is performed through the sacrificial death, the resurrection, and the coming again of Jesus, God in the form of man, moved by His great redemptive and re-creative purpose.

Christ Jesus, existing in the form of God, counted not the being equal with God, on an equality with God, a thing to be grasped at,² but took the form of a man.

As man, He showed humanity, by His own life, what a perfect human life should be, in both its manward and Godward aspects. As man, He in His death “bare our sins in His own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.”³

The work of conforming human beings to the image of Christ will not be complete until His coming again. Could there be a stronger reason why Christians should pray that He shall come? “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it

¹ 1 Pet. i. 20 (R.V.). ² Phil. ii. 6 (R.V.). ³ 1 Pet. ii. 24.

doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.”¹

Besides, time hangs heavily until that moment when all the humankind on earth, looking upward in wonder, will cry with one voice, as they see their returning God:

“*Ecce Homo!*”—“Behold the Man!”

¹ 1 John iii. 2.

XXIV

EXPECTED BEFORE: COMING THIS TIME

THE incredulous may say that just as our Lord did not come, when He was expected in earlier times, so He will not come now. They would hardly wish to be reckoned among the signs of the times, yet it is biblically recorded that on the eve of great crises there have been, and will be, these doubters and even scoffers.

The tendency to decry prophecy and its imminent fulfilment is not new.

“What is that proverb that ye have in Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth? . . . Thus saith the Lord God: . . . The days are at hand, and the effect (fulfilment, R.V.) of every vision. . . . There shall none of My words be prolonged any more, but the word which I have spoken shall be done, saith the Lord God.”¹

That our Lord did not come when expected before does not discourage those who are now watching for His coming. The times and conditions are obviously riper than ever in the past. The appointed signs of His coming are more in number and more distinct, and they are all speaking together with cumulative effect.

¹ Ezek. xii. 22-28.

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Most natural is it that in past times of world-trouble the hope of the Lord's return should have been excited. This great coming event has been casting forward its shadow ever since history began. It could not be otherwise. History does repeat itself, in the sense that it runs into a certain mould and irresistibly conforms in its principal features to one pattern.

The grand theme of world-history is the career of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. The main course of history has been, and will be, the preparation for and realisation of all that God purposes in Christ. How, indeed, is it possible for history to divagate very far from the line that leads onward to its destination.

It is understandable, then, that, as it were, the tide of history should have rolled up in successive waves toward the high-water mark of the manifestation in glory of the Lord Jesus Christ as He returns to reign! Sometimes in the past the faithful have supposed the high-water mark to be reached, and that He was about to appear. Their expectation was premature rather than mistaken. It was aroused by crises which were typical of that final crisis in which this Age ends and the next begins; the world fails, but our Lord triumphs.

The more He has been expected before, the more He will come this time. After hundreds of years of promise He made His First Advent. After nineteen centuries more waiting, He is about to return.

X X V

THE KINGDOM OF EARTH NOT RENOUNCED

ANOTHER fallacious idea respecting the Lord's Second Advent is that He renounced the claim to the Messianic Kingdom of the world and desired only the Spiritual Kingdom of the human heart. He claims both these dominions. An ordinary human king claims to be spiritual king of his wife's heart, but is at the same time the king of his territorial kingdom. Never did the Lord Jesus renounce the earthly kingdom which, on His return, He will rule by virtue of divine appointment and Davidic descent. "My kingdom is not of this world"—these words have been strangely misinterpreted by some.

"Not of this world." The word *of* is *ek* in the Greek, and has reference to the *origin* of His Kingdom, of His Kingly Authority, and not to the realm in which the Kingly Authority is exercised. The Lord Jesus' earthly kingdom is of divine, and not of human appointment. He is crowned not on earth but in heaven before He comes to establish His earthly kingdom. But the Cross came before the Crown. He came to die at His First Advent; at His Second Advent, having first obtained the Kingdom, He will come to rule. The Jews wanted

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the ruling Messiah, and overlooked the fact that, according to the prophets, Messiah must first come to suffer before coming to rule.

Jesus told them that this could not be. He preached thus: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable because He was nigh to Jerusalem (where He was so soon to die and not yet to reign), and because they supposed the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear. He said therefore, "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a Kingdom and to *return* . . ."

That very title, "the Son of Man," asserts that the kingdom of the Lord Jesus is obtained in heaven, but exists upon earth. Jesus, in using the title, Son of Man, asserted Himself to be He whom this prophecy announces:

"Behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."¹

So Jesus did most positively claim the Kingdom of this world. But He would not accept it *from* the world. When men sought to make Him King, He departed again into a mountain by Himself alone.²

When Satan, the rebellious spirit prince of this

¹ Dan. vii. 13, 14.

² John vi. 15.

world, offered to Him all the kingdoms of the world, He rejected them. His kingdom should be neither of Satan nor of the world: it should be of God! But the abdication, which some attribute to Him, He never committed. For abdication, it would have been to renounce His right to the kingdom of this earth. Unless He is to be King here in the political and every other sense—then His supremacy in the Universe will be incomplete.

XXVI

THE SECOND ADVENT NOT A GRADUAL PROCESS

“NOT as a sudden change but as a gradual growth will the Kingdom of Christ come.” Such is the opinion of some, but a higher authority, Christ Himself, has said the contrary. Suddenly as lightning it will come, according to Him. “For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.”¹

By what analogy, according to what precedent, on what principle, is it deemed that the coming of Christ's Kingdom will be slow and gradual? The divine dealing with mankind in history has been slow and gradual, but it has been punctuated by swift, decisive events, and that culminating event, the appearing of Christ, will be sudden indeed! Gradual in one sense, it is true, for it is very long since God first purposed, long since He first announced, the establishment of His Kingdom upon earth. Centuries elapsed before the birth at Bethlehem of the Divine Ruler of His Kingdom. And even then, the setting up of that Kingdom in the world was to be deferred for nearly two thousand years. Suddenly as lightning will it

¹ Matt. xxiv. 27.

come when the time is ripe, "*but* first must the Son of Man suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation." ¹

The Atonement did not take long! Within a few short hours our Lord was not only betrayed, arrested, tried, condemned, scourged, but crucified and buried!

After that and His resurrection and ascension, comes another phase spoken of by the Lord Jesus, the King Himself, in these words: "For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." ² He is thenceforth "expecting," ³ as the Apostle expresses it, until the day of His royal appearing.

That phase ends with the crisis depicted in Psalm ii.—the kings of the earth setting themselves against the Lord and against His anointed. But it is in vain. God's Kingdom comes at last! The Lord shall *suddenly* come! ⁴

"As the lightning . . . so shall the coming of the Son of Man be!"

¹ Luke xvii. 25.

³ Heb. x. 13.

² Mark xii. 36.

⁴ Mal. iii. 1.

XXVII

THE SECOND ADVENT NOT IN THE HEART ONLY

“**I**N our hearts—not visibly from heaven, but in the hearts of men and women—will be the second coming of Christ. He will establish His Kingdom by using us as His instruments.” This theory, however fair seeming at the first glimpse, is untenable. If only those who advance it would explain exactly what they mean, and how they think that human agents could ever replace the Lord Himself !

Ever since He suffered here and ascended into heaven, Christ has been asking to enter human hearts. “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.” Many doors remain bolted and barred against Him, some people even saying there is no such Person and no such knock. Even the multitudes who do hear and open, are not too effective as His instruments.

The history of the Christian nations shows that the human instrument is not adequate to the work that our Lord purposes to do in, and for, the world. Christendom, as we call it, is very, very imperfectly Christ’s Kingdom !

It needs Christ to come in His own strength, in His own Person, and by His own hand and His

own instrumentality, to establish His own Kingdom. Common sense can draw no other lesson from past and present experience !

Besides, how could a Christ-loving world be satisfied with a Kingdom set up through human activity, by an invisible Christ, instead of a Kingdom set up by the direct activity of a visible, present Christ !

It is the sight of Christ that will make the glory of earth as of heaven. The more there is of the Spirit of Christ in the hearts of men and women, the more they long to behold "the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ*,"¹ and the more they are conscious—is it not so ?—of their own incapability of representing Him as He should be represented in the building of His Kingdom and the manifesting of His glory.

"In Him is no darkness at all,"² but the best of Christians will admit that so much cannot be said of them ! The fact is that human hearts are lanterns through which the Light of the World is willing to shine by His Spirit, so far as the smallness and dimness of the lanterns allow. But that Light cannot always be confined within that smallness of the human lantern, nor be dimmed by its dimness.

The First Advent meant the Lord Jesus Christ visibly present to the world.

The Second Advent will likewise mean His visible presence to the world.

To assume the contrary is bad logic which it would require very strong evidence to justify.

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

² 1 John i. 5.

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The evidence is all the other way. The predictions are of a visible advent, and the signs heralding it are of a visible kind. The true Light was in the world at the First Advent, and, as John says, "we beheld His glory." Human eyes looked upon, human hands handled, the Word of Life, the Life which was Light of men. For the Life was manifested, and they saw it. At His Second Advent also the Light will be seen.

How much paler is the reflected light of His followers than the true Light of Christ Himself!

The moonlight is very fair, but because it is only derived from the Sun it is in comparison poor in warmth and light. When the moon is shining, it is not dark—but it is still night! When the Sun rises, darkness is completely vanquished—it is day! So is the difference between this present Christian era and the grander Christian era soon to come, when Christ Himself, "the Sun of Righteousness, shall arise."¹

When He was here before, He said: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness."² The world's need is for Him to come again into the world, as He has promised, this time with His announced power and glory, so that every eye shall see Him and, seeing, believe.

In the brightness of His Light disbelief will perish. The supernatural powers of the darkness of this world and their leader will be unable to blind humanity.

It will be the world's daytime at last.

¹ Mal. iv. 2.

² John xii. 46.

XXVIII

THE SECOND ADVENT AND THE LAW OF LOVE

ONE who still dissents from the doctrine of our Lord's personal return wrote the other day: "Surely what is needed is a change in the hearts of men and women—a change brought about by obedience to the law of love, which is the law of Christ."

Very true! But that is the supreme reason why the coming of the Lord is needed. To begin with, it is not too easy, until He comes, to understand how His law of love is to be applied. For example, one man, a pacifist, thinks that the law of love forbids him to take up arms and kill, whereas another man thinks that the law of love commands him to fight in defence of his country. One nation, witness of a war raging between two others, decides that the law of love requires abandonment of neutrality; another nation decides the contrary. After a war is ended, a nation inclined to lenient dealing with the late enemy may find that this application of the law of love is accounted hurtful to friends and allies. It is the same with relations between individuals. Each of two persons may believe that the law of love requires a third person to be treated in diametrically opposite

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ways. Again we find X and Y each demanding in the name of that law some benefit from Z which Z cannot possibly give to both. The dividing-line between sense and sensibility, sentiment and sentimentality, is not easy to draw in "this world darkness."

Here are more instances of the difficulty of understanding how the perfect law should be observed in this imperfect Age, pending the return of Christ. An international issue that raises the problem in its acutest form is the race question. Does the law of love command a complete ignoring of racial distinctions, or does it not? There are conflicting opinions on this subject held by people equally desirous to be obedient to the law of love. Then social and political workers in their own national sphere are frequently in a dilemma, because of the conflict that may arise between the apparent interests of their cause on the one hand and their relatives or friends or their fellow-workers on the other hand. Oh for "the simplicity that is in Christ,"¹ and will be, both in heaven and earth, when He comes again!

In this disordered Age, with its evil complications, the law of love is hindered in its working. Under the reign of Jesus, who, as God, is love, His law and the world-order He is to establish will perfectly harmonise, the one being the expression of the other. Therefore, the interpretation and the application of the law of love will then be without any ambiguity. Even now, light and guidance can certainly be had from our Lord through His

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 3.

Spirit, but His Spirit is also teaching, with increasing emphasis, a divine discontent with the limitations existing in this present evil Age, which is to end with the personal coming and full dominion of "the God of love."¹

Then, and not before, His constraining love will operate with all its power. The thoughts and intentions of heart and mind will be brought into obedience to Him. Unloving influences will be vanquished. The "god of this age" will be under restraint. The appearing of the God of love, whether to His Church or to the world, will be the signal for the outpouring of the Spirit of Grace.² The law of love will then prevail on earth as in heaven—human hearts will love God as He asks to be loved. This love between God and human-kind will be the source of love between human being and human being. "The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"—such is its proper definition. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."³

A mere camaraderie between humanity, as such, will not suffice—at Babel there was that, it appears—for the first and greatest clause in the law of love is this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."⁴

When even in the Church of Christ, during her Lord's absence "in a far country," there have

¹ 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

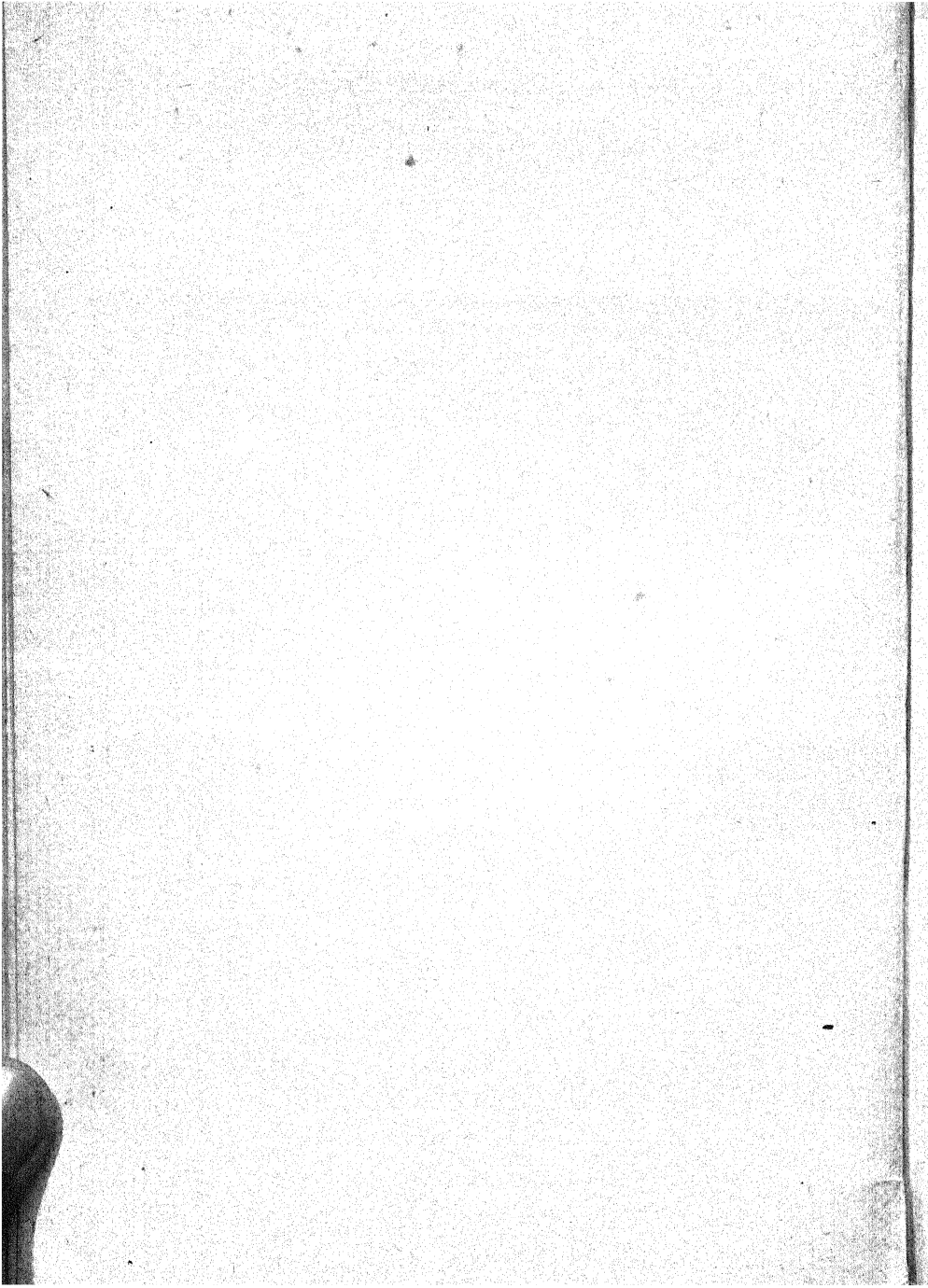
² 1 Pet. i. 13; Zech. xii. 10.

³ 1 John iv. 10, 11.

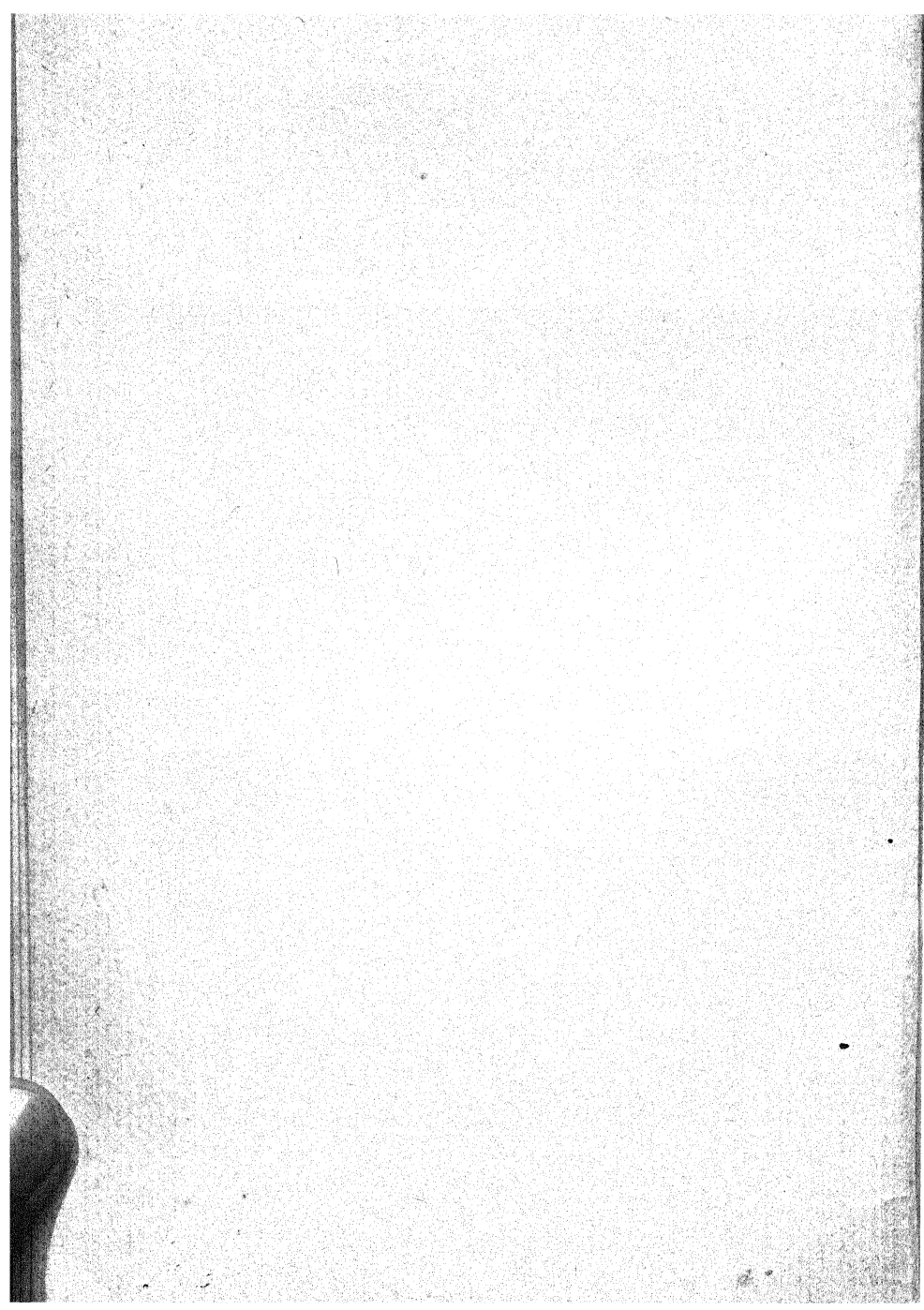
⁴ Matt. xxii. 37.

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been failings in her love for Him and for the brethren, how much less will the world ever be obedient to His law of love? Who are they that, having considered their own conscious and unconscious infractions of that law and the pooriness of their own love, whether toward God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, or toward their fellow-beings, can still refrain from praying for the personal, visible return of our great God and Saviour?



PART IV
CHRIST'S RETURN



XXIX

CHRIST'S RETURN IN RELATION TO RELIGION

ONE single religion, universal—and also true—will be the result of Christ's coming again. "Higher Criticism" of a certain sort will be obliterated. The comparative study of religions will go into oblivion on the return of Him whose religion is beyond compare. Varieties of religious experience will be resolved into one—the great experience which all humanity will then have of beholding God face to face! Non-christian religions will disappear in the presence of "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."¹ The doctrines of the deity of Jesus, of His incarnation, of His bodily resurrection and ascension, will be indisputably proved by His return. The doctrine of Atonement by His death upon the Cross will never be challenged again. That His second coming is a literal, a personal, an incarnate, and a visible coming will be demonstrated by the accomplished fact.

The Second Advent already casts its light upon all these matters. Take, to begin with, higher criticism. (Why "higher"?—this use of the word is rather pretentious.) If criticism can give

¹ Tit. ii. 13.

us to-day a biblical text which is more precisely the same as that which the Lord Jesus Christ has authenticated, well and good ; but if the " higher " critics profess to improve upon His knowledge regarding the Scriptures, they put themselves entirely out of court, especially in these times when so much new evidence, supplied by archæology and by current political events, is confirming pre-critical views as to the Bible. The chaotic state into which higher criticism has fallen owing to its collision with hard facts is disclosed by a writer whose not unsympathetic attitude makes his verdict all the more overwhelming. He says :

" Everywhere uncertainties abound, and, like the dove after the Deluge, we seem to find no solid ground for the soles of our feet. Holscher remarks that there is hardly any department of Hebrew literature or religion *on which the assertions of investigators are not at complete variance with one another*, and goes the length of saying that of the work of Wellhausen and his school *hardly one stone remains upon another*. . . . Wellhausen's famous dictum that 'the question is not whether the Psalter contains any post-exilic Psalms, but whether it contains any that are pre-exilic, is irretrievably shattered.' "¹

The German philosopher, Hegel, dealt a crushing blow at higher criticism by saying, in his *Philosophy of History* :

" Among us Germans, the so-called ' higher criticism ' which reigns supreme in the domain of

¹ From the chapter on " Criticism," in *The People and the Book*, by A. S. Peake.

philology has also taken possession of our historical literature. This 'higher criticism' has been the pretext for introducing all the anti-historical monstrosities that a vain imagination could suggest."

Hegel accuses the higher critics of—

"putting subjective fancies in the place of historical data—fancies whose merit is measured by their boldness—that is, the scantiness of the particulars on which they are based and the peremptoriness with which they contradict the best-established facts of history."

Hegel proceeds with his indictment of the so-called higher critical method as follows :

"The critical mode of treating history is pre-dominant in Germany. . . . Its peculiarity in point of fact, and also, of intention, consists in the acuteness with which the writer extorts something from the records *which was not in the matters recorded.*"

The incomparable Christ Jesus some have tried to reduce to the level of other gods, or conceptions of gods, as these are found in non-christian cults or pre-christian times. This is sometimes done in the name of Comparative Religion. Observing the prevalence in all lands, in all epochs, of certain religious ideas, those who mistake the real significance of Comparative Religion falsely imagine that Christianity is falsified. Quite the contrary, as we shall see. It is true that certain dominant ideas belonging to Christianity are found in other religions, and date back to a time long before the incarna-

tion of Jesus Christ. The resemblances between Pagan and Christian beliefs are often exaggerated, and some supposed discoveries of resemblance are due to misinterpretation of fact. Affirming the "uniqueness of the Redeemer Christ" and referring to "similarities that are superficial rather than essential," the author of a recent work, *The Pagan Background of Early Christianity*, says :

"The Christian Saviour, who redeemed men by self-sacrifice, is an idea which was repugnant to many pagan philosophers' opinion of the divine nature, and was completely unlike the Saviour-gods of the mystery religions."¹

The case, as stated by those who deny the originality and unique authority of Christianity because they consider that many other religions are similar and were earlier in the field, is this. They contend that from earliest times all over the world there has been worship of saviours owing their birth to virgin mothers. There has been consciousness of sin and of the need of sacrifice in consequence of sin. There has been a doctrine of regeneration and second birth. There has been the eating of bread and the drinking of wine as a religious rite. These tenets are common, they say, to nearly all religions of the world, and then (after declaring what they consider the consequent deposition of Christianity) they ask what is the meaning of this fact ! It is, we tell them, this :

1. An original and a world-wide revelation of religious truth was made by Almighty God to all the peoples then living, including the truth of

¹ W. R. Halliday.

redemption needed for sin, and the Saviour who would, in the fulness of time, come to redeem. This revelation was never wholly forgotten, however neglected and deformed it may have been, by those to whom it was made and their succeeding generations. We may be sure that there was never a time, however remotely prehistoric, when the world was not provided with a revelation of redemption by the blood of the coming Saviour. The wide dispersal and persistence of doctrines, comparable to those of Christianity, certainly goes to confirm the biblical account of things as here outlined.

Long before Abraham "saw His day and was glad," "the Seed of the woman,"¹ the Atoning Victor over sin, was announced—He who in due time was the child born of Mary, who should be called the Son of God.²

To Cain and to Abel it had been revealed that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." They knew that in prediction and anticipation of the ultimate offering-up of the one perfect and sufficient Sacrifice for sin, it was required of them that they should offer a slain lamb. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and unto his offering: but unto Cain and his offering had He not respect."³

The character-study given to us of Cain is of high interest. A shedder of human blood, he objected on no humanitarian grounds to make the prescribed sin-offering of a lamb. The issue was, therefore, his objection to admit the sin which only the Lamb appointed by God can take away

¹ Gen. iii. 15.

² Luke i. 31, 32.

³ Gen. iv. 4, 5.

Atonement by the innocent blood of Jesus Christ, of which the blood of the lamb was a type, really and truly involves—on the part of sinners who admit the need of such atonement—the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart, which God requires. Their admission that Christ had to die for them is the sacrifice of their own pride and self-righteousness. They are, in that sense, crucified with Christ.

The world-wide revelation notwithstanding, the peoples of that ancient time fell away from God, who “looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted His way upon the earth.”¹ After the Flood, whose record has also persisted in world-wide legend and tradition, the first thing was to build an altar and offer the same sacrifice, typical, provisional, and prospective, which had been required from far earlier times. Failure in allegiance to God again developing, one man was chosen to receive over again the primeval revelation, and to be the father of a people chosen, not as an act of mere favouritism, but that they might keep alight the truth of redemption until its full and final revelation in the Son of God, Jesus Himself.

In Abraham, indeed, on condition of his faith, God chose the man from whom Jesus, as to His humanity, should descend; and in Jesus, Abraham's Seed, all the nations of the earth, both Jew and Gentile, were to be blessed. Humanity at large having been deaf and blind to a world-wide revelation, nothing remained but to school a particular

people in the saving truth of God, until the Lord Jesus should come to be a light to the Gentiles as well as the glory of His people Israel. The love and Godlikeness of this plan silence the strange complaint that unfair partiality was shown to a people, chosen, it is true, but chosen, above all, for responsibility and service to God and to mankind. Two things, despite all failings, they did. They conserved the Scriptures which promised, and they performed the sacrifices which typically predicted, the redemption to be accomplished for men and women of every race by the Lamb of God.

Since Calvary, the peoples of Christendom have been the particular custodians of the revealed truth, the most receptive of the written and the incarnate Word of God. At the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, He will become the religion, the God, of every people on the earth.

2. Their priority in human acquaintance does not make pre-christian religions more true than Christianity, nor as true! It does not imply that Christianity had its origin in those other religions, nor that it had the same origin as they. It is scientifically justifiable (as we see from the discussion in the chapter "How Prophecy is Possible") to say that the Lord Jesus Christ "*is from the beginning.*"¹ Time is not of the essence of this matter. "Ye were redeemed with precious blood, as of a lamb without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was *foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world*, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake."² The Cross of Christ, His

¹ 1 John ii. 13.

² 1 Pet. i. 18-20.

crucifixion—that event could be seen by supernatural vision “from the beginning.” It could not be seen by human beings until it happened, or, as one might say, until they “happened upon” it.

Supernatural awareness of the incarnation and crucifixion of the Son of God necessarily provided insurgent spirit-beings with material for counterfeit religions. A counterfeit impresses not by its difference from the true Pattern, but by its deceptive resemblance thereto. That is perhaps a point of importance for the study of Comparative Religion. “The spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places”¹—these have to be reckoned with. Their “religious” teachings to the children of men will be imitations of the truth, with its virtue left out; fair-seeming without, if corrupt within. For “Satan fashioneth himself as an angel of light!”² Satan’s quarrel is with the supremacy in heaven and earth, of Christ Jesus, and with His redemptive Sacrifice upon the Cross as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

On reflection this fact is obvious: Given the one true and universal religion revealed in Jesus Christ, it is not possible for any other religion, whether a merely incomplete or a deliberately counterfeit religion, to differ very much in letter and form from the true religion. No created mind, human or superhuman, is capable of conceiving a religion totally different from *the* Religion consisting in Christ Jesus. What comfort to know that it is not long before there shall be visibly present to

¹ Eph. vi. 12 (R.V.).

² 2 Cor. xi. 14 (R.V.).

the world "one God and His Name one." In worshipping Jesus all nations will be agreed, bound together by the love and reverence they shall all render to Him!

One simple reason for any resemblances there may be between Christianity and pre-christian religions is the ancient and widespread influence of the Hebrew religion.

If Christ Jesus had never yet been incarnate, and the New Testament never yet written, we should know nearly as much about Him as we do, for the Old Testament gives an almost perfect picture of Him as incarnate, crucified, and reigning as He will reign at His Second Advent. Even before the Old Testament existed, Abraham saw the day of Jesus Christ and was glad. He did not keep his gladness to himself, we may be sure. A man of his importance was able to spread far and wide his knowledge of a coming Saviour. A poignant object-lesson had taught Abraham that God will provide Himself a Lamb. No substitute was that coming Lamb to be, for God in His love for human sinners will not withhold His Son, His only Son¹ in whom, as Abraham's seed and God's own and only begotten Son, all the nations of the earth are to be blessed.

This knowledge of the future appearing of the Saviour-God was certainly handed down to the time of Joseph, who was Pharaoh's right hand in Egypt, the whole nation being ruled according to his word,² who therefore had unique opportunity of speaking of the great truth. In later time the

¹ Gen. xxii. 16.

² Gen. xli. 40, 41.

same truth must have been remembered, however dimly, by those in Egyptian bondage. It was declared anew to Moses and by him enshrined in the Law and set forth in the sacrifices, and the contemporary Gentile peoples assuredly were curious concerning these things. When the fugitives from Egypt at last became a renowned nation in the promised land, their religion, and the Saviour-God it announced, inevitably became the talk of the whole known world.

The great King David's Messianic Psalms, in which he prophetically celebrated his greater descendant, the divine Messiah, could not be wholly misunderstood even by the blindest. The ambassadors of Kings David and Solomon were at every court on earth. They proudly spoke of their faith. They returned each year to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, and the Gentile nations, to which they were accredited, necessarily knew the reason why. The Hebrew Scriptures were of course studied by the philosophers and religious-minded people of every land.

While Palestine was at the height of its worldly glory, the prophets began to speak God's warnings of chastisement for sin to be followed by redemption by His Son, who should be incarnate in Bethlehem, should die for the sins of the people and should afterwards come in glory to reign in righteousness over the world. Isaiah, in his 53rd chapter, really gives the New Testament in a nutshell, and we should know the Lord Jesus Christ from Isaiah's teaching alone. What a sensation the Hebrew prophets must have made ! The friends, the rivals,

the foes of the chosen people in every country would devour the news of the prophet's messages of doom. It was then as it is to-day—there was eagerness to know the strength and the weakness and the prospects of strength or downfall of another nation, and especially a strong, prestigious one !

Even when the preachings of doom were fulfilled by events, the truth could still be witnessed to among the Gentiles. Not even a Beaconsfield and a Reading, in one, would have such importance as Daniel had in Babylon, and after that in the Medo-Persian Empire. He was the outstanding figure in two successive world-dominant Empires. Daniel could thus be a missionary to the Gentiles long before St. Paul ! He was both missionary and prophet, being entrusted by God with very definite revelations concerning the Christ, the Messiah, as Redeemer and as King. To Gentile Emperors, to Gentile priests, to Gentile civil as well as religious dignitaries he spoke the whole truth of God as revealed to his race.

Coming down to Roman times, the Jews were widely dispersed in the Empire. In their synagogues the Hebrew Scriptures were read and expounded, and thus the Gentiles were kept constantly aware of the truths of promised redemption and of Messiah's Kingdom. Considering the history and influence of the Hebrews through the ages, it is plain that the religious ideas of the Gentiles were irresistibly coloured by, if not also wholly conformed to, the truth of Messiah, the divine Redeemer and King.

Two things that grieve the heart of His followers

will cease at the Second Advent, namely, the denial that His death on the Cross was an atoning death, and the denial that He is God. The wounds of the Cross, seen on His uplifted hands, will silence the last murmur of denial that "Christ died for our sins."¹ As for His deity, that will be proved by each fact and feature of His return. It will be visible in Him, and in every circumstance of His appearing.

Even at His First Advent He declared His own deity. "God only can forgive sins," as the Scribes very truly observed, and Jesus maintained that He was God by His assertion that He could and did forgive sins. As reported by St. Mark, He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and "the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."²

It has been well said that this is the most definite and unequivocal claim to be very God of very God that it is possible for Jesus to have made.

He claimed lordship over the forces of nature.³ He also exercised prophetic power, not admitting, as did the prophets of the Old Testament, that He was simply a channel of divine prophecy, but claiming to know of His own knowledge what the future was to bring forth. Not John only, but all, including Mark, inform us that Jesus asserted Himself to be the Son of God, the Father, in a special, unique, and exclusive sense. When one hailed Him as "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"⁴ what was His reply—"Why callest thou Me *good*? There is

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 3.

² *Ibid.* iv. 39-41.

³ Mark ii. 5-10.

⁴ *Ibid.* x. 17, 18.

none good save one, even God." The only possible meaning of that was, that Jesus, who *never admitted any sin in Himself, nor any want of goodness in Himself, but saw it only in others*, claimed to be God, and repudiated the idea that He was merely a Teacher. Then, after He had held up the standard of perfection in conduct, and His inquirer, knowing he could not attain to it, had gone crestfallen away, He again revealed His deity to the disciples. They, aghast before the problem of earning salvation by their own good works, asked, "Then who can be saved?" and Jesus, looking upon them, saith, "With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."¹

Peter, seeing this to mean that salvation was to be had through Jesus Himself, urged, "Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee." Then He spoke to them of the Gospel and of how He, the Son of Man, was to die and to rise again.²

In the Parable of the Vineyard, Jesus clearly represents Himself as the one divine Son sent by God into His vineyard, in succession to His servants, the prophets.

Jesus is the God of the Old Testament—He said so Himself. Over and over, He identified Himself with the Old Testament God. His return would be with "the clouds"! That expression has a special meaning, implying deity, for we have here the Shekinah spoken of in the Old Testament—the very cloud that guided Israel in the wilderness. Our Lord when He foretells His coming in the clouds of heaven is declaring His deity. To the

¹ Mark x. 26, 27.

² *Ibid.* x. 29-34.

High Priest who asked, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" He replied, "I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Nothing could be plainer. "Power," as explained by Dr. Klausner, the Jewish author of a recent work on the life of Jesus, was an alternative name for God, frequently used by the Jews. In the expression, "the clouds of heaven," they recognised the Shekinah. This claim to deity, while they denied it, they fully understood to be made. Here are other examples:

"The Lord is my Shepherd."¹

"The Lord shall feed His flock like a shepherd," says the Old Testament.²

"I am the good Shepherd," says the Lord Jesus.³

"My people have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters,"⁴ says God, in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, Jesus, the same God, says:

"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. . . . Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."⁵

Even I AM, the great Old Testament name for God, Jesus applied to Himself thus, "Before Abraham was, I AM."⁶

¹ Ps. xxiii.

² Isa. xl. 11.

³ John x. 11.

⁴ Jer. ii. 13.

⁵ John iv. 10, 14.

⁶ *Ibid.* viii. 58.

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CHRIST'S RETURN IN RELATION TO
THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

EVIL ceases to be a mystery when we spell it with a D. "I don't believe in the Devil," one may retort. You will, when you see the Devil and all his works suppressed at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. A spy in war-time is not more modest in his claim to existence than the Devil, the invisible author of evil. The greatest favour that can be done to the Devil, is to say that there is no such person. But to deny the existence of the Devil is to impugn the honour of God; is to accuse Him of the evil of which, Satan, the Devil, that great spirit Rebel, is really guilty. Of this, more presently. . . . Discarnate beings—intelligent, volitional—differing from ourselves chiefly in being discarnate—the possible existence of such beings, nobody nowadays will venture to deny. The Bible affirms positively that they do exist, and that they, like ourselves, are part of the creation of God. We learn also that sin first infected His unseen creation, so that evil had its origin there. Before there was fallen humanity, there were fallen angels. The mischief is the same whether in human or non-human beings—self-way, not God's way, rebellion against the Most

High, the disease of pride, the abuse of the glorious privilege of free will.

"How art thou fallen, Lucifer, son of the morning! . . . For thou hast said in thy heart: I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the Congregation. . . . I will ascend also above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High."¹

There is the essence of sin! Instead of a willing allegiance to God, a wilful self-assertion as against God—a pretentious claim even to be God! The human heart, unregenerate, gives an echoing response to this original cry of rebellion. "Ye shall be as God,"² is not only the word of temptation offered and responded to in the biblical account of the human Fall, but is the theme of much teaching at the present day.

An eminent author once wrote that there is such a thing as human discontent with the believed fact that God exists, and a feeling that the obligation of reverence is onerous—a disposition, if it were possible, to steal the fire of the Creator and live apart from, and independent of Him. Is that not the very depth and reality of sin?

"Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be ye horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."³

¹ Isa. xiv. 12-14.

² Gen. iii. 5 (R.V.).

³ Jer. ii. 12.

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It stands to reason that the Universe, disordered by rebellion, cannot fulfil its Creator's ideal.

"Then why did He make people so?" is the frequently heard comment.

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?"¹

To be automatons—is that what they would have wished to be—those who ask, "Why did God make us so?"

Do not parents delight more in the child who has free will enough to go a contrary way, and yet of his own choice goes the parents' way, than in one who seems incapable, for want of will power, of doing otherwise? It is the joyful and voluntary devotion given of fixed, deliberate purpose by the persons He has created that God seeks. If humans had been denied freedom of choice concerning their relations to God, their place in the scale of Creation would have been far lower than it is. "To be free, in the sense of being capable of intelligent choice, is," says one of our philosophers, "of the very nature of mind."

The human artist and inventor can give form and substance to their creations. They cannot invest them with free will. God alone has that power; and the endowment of mankind with free will is the highest exercise of His creative power. In fact, by giving us free will He has given us a share of His own power. Only, as with every sort of power, if free will is abused,

¹ Rom. ix. 20.

it works havoc. There are but two ways of using free will—a right way and a wrong way. One use is the service of God, and the other, the service of Satan. Satan has planted the standard of rebellion against God, making division where there should be union. Our free will diverted from its proper function, which is the glory of God and the resultant perfection of Creation, swells the original revolt, and increases the disorder in Creation.

To revert to the subject of the personal existence of "the Devil and Satan,"¹ as John calls him, naming him dragon and serpent too, as though determined to have no mistake about the matter, we find the hideous result of denying or ignoring Satan's existence has been in many cases to weaken, and even to destroy, faith in God. Because the cruelties, the wrongs, the suffering and death consequent upon Satan's rebellion have been laid to the account of God. "What sort of God can this be, who permits, etc. etc.?" . . . Has it not been said times without number?

We are, if we exclude the existence of the Devil, reduced to explaining evil away or making it out to be in some sense a good. One sees in what a predicament thinkers are placed if they leave the Devil out of their reckoning. Professor J. Arthur Thomson, for instance, in his *Science and Religion*, says: "Many perplexing facts rise in the mind when we venture to think of animate nature as an expression of the 'will of God.'" He quotes and seeks a reply to the "unrelenting arraignment

¹ Rev. xx. 2.

of nature" made by another savant who has accused "Nature" of cruelty, torture, and destruction, and yet another who has said that animate nature is too much like a vast gladiatorial show, and a third who has brought a terrible indictment of nature, under the heading, "Is Life Worth Living?" Bravely does Professor Thomson answer that these are "one-sided pictures"; that things are not quite as bad as all that; that "evolution is, on the whole, integrative"; that the divers calamities affecting humanity are "the kind of sifting to which nature has subjected all her children—including man"; and that "so far from nature's eliminations being indiscriminate, they have been persistently winnowing."

But God by revelation has told us that He intends a very different order in nature. He does not ask us to apologise in His name for things as they are. "The Creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption. . . ." ¹

When shall this be? When our Lord Jesus Christ comes back again. The Apostle is telling us that even nature will be delivered from its present bondage of corruption when Jesus comes, just as believers in Christ shall be finally delivered from the last memory of their bonds.

"For we know that the whole Creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together (or with us) until now." ² Far from defending the existing order, or urging that the good outweighs the evil, the Apostle admits "the sufferings of the present time," contrasting it with the future "glory which

¹ Rom. viii. 21.

² *Ibid.* viii. 22 (R.V.).

shall be revealed to us-ward." ¹ From start to finish, the Bible associates calamity and suffering in nature with sin committed by man and angels. These high intelligences, by their revolt against God, involve the lower Creation in disaster. When their rebellion is subdued, nature, as well as nations, will be at peace.

Even without a revelation to inform us, we might know the existence of Satan by the evidence of his work in the world to-day. The operation of a malign personage is but too obvious.

"Who is doing the kind of thing the Devil alone should do ?

.

The Devil is voted out, so of course the Devil's gone,
But simple people would like to know who carries the
business on ? "

"Christianity," says Schlegel, "is the emancipation of the human race from the bondage of that inimical Spirit who denied God and, as far as in him lies, leads all created intelligences astray." ²

Now, as the Age is closing, it imports more than ever to preach that Satan is and works. Otherwise, the trials that precede, and those that make up, the great Tribulation, of which the Lord Jesus has warned the world, will not be rightly understood. There have actually been, and it is said there are to-day, persons whose hatred of the evils of the present world-order, which Satan has marred, has prompted them ignorantly to regard him not as the enemy responsible for existing wrongs, but as their champion and friend !

¹ Rom. viii. 18 (R.V.).

² *Philosophy of History.*

"Then why does not God put an end to Satan's evil doing?" comes the next question. God is putting an end to it, but it is not necessarily, as human experience indicates, a simple, sudden business to deal with a rebel, especially with one who has been a repository of authority. So in the case of Satan, the Spirit Prince¹ of the earth, who has betrayed his trust, rebelled against Him who gave to him his power. The Seed of the woman, the holy thing which should be born of Mary, the incarnate Son of God must come, venturing into the kingdom of the enemy that the enemy might be judged and overthrown. "That is nearly two thousand years ago," an objector's voice will say, "and yet sin and sorrow, disorder and warfare, have gone on ever since."

Most true. The war is not yet ended. Nevertheless, it is won. In the war of 1914-1918 the decisive battle was that of the Marne, but guns did not stop firing for four long years after that. In this mightier struggle the decisive battle was fought upon the Cross, but the victorious end will come only when the Victor of the Cross returns.

¹ John xii. 31, xiv. 30, xvi. 11.

XXXI

CHRIST'S RETURN IN RELATION TO PHILOSOPHY

WHEN the light of day touches some of the fair-seeming bodies and flowers that have lain buried in darkness for ages—they suddenly fall to dust !

When Christ appears, the same thing will happen to the philosophy that has ignored Him—it will fall to dust. “There is one complete metaphysical system that is usually ignored by metaphysicians, and that is Christianity,” remarks the author of one of the most recent works on philosophy.¹ Yet a Christ-less metaphysic is a futility and a falsity. Consider the fact of Christ's approaching return, which is now proven as surely as anything not yet experienced can be proven, and how obvious is the folly of non-christian philosophy ! From the sheerly intellectual point of view (if that could be taken alone) it is a most profitless activity. A philosophy which denies Christ, or even leaves Him out of account, has, philosophically speaking, no *raison d'être*. Between the Christian metaphysic on the one hand and science on the other, with its practically useful seeking after partial and relative truth—there is no place for a philosophy

¹ *Adventures in Philosophy*, by J. C. Wordsworth.

which, not being founded on Christ, is founded on nothing at all. Could not every useful service that a non-christian philosophy seeks to render be as well and better rendered by the particular sciences, and such philosophy itself be eliminated, the field being left to Religion and Science? Such a conclusion suggests itself, especially in view of the portents of Christ's reappearing. Certainly philosophy is under the necessity of justifying its existence, and the mere ingenuity of its processes does not justify a philosophy which, beginning in nothingness, can conduct only to nothingness. Many modern philosophers are Christians, of course, but they keep their philosophy and their Christianity in separate compartments, instead of letting their philosophy grow out of their Christianity—out of Christ. No wonder, then, that philosophy travels in various vicious and eccentric circles which are neither agreeable to one another nor to ultimate truth.

Philosophy aims, does it not, at a final synthesis of all knowledge, at a supreme generalisation of fact, at a conspectus of all truth, at a cognizance of First Cause and of Consummation, at a Vision of the Absolute, at acquaintance with God, and with God, as what, and who, He really is. Now the Christian philosophy, as set forth in the New Testament, is alone in attaining this aim. The first fourteen verses of the Gospel according to St. John are worth more than all the books of all the ordinary philosophers from before Plato's day until now. Indeed, St. John's Gospel is very specially an exposition of the philosophical aspect

of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, while in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, though the same philosophy appears, the emphasis is rather upon social and ethical, political and Messianic considerations. The apostolic presentation of metaphysical truth is inexpressibly superior to anything that other philosophers have advanced. It is grander, sounder, more substantial, more organic, and certainly more accordant even with the demands of human reason than any of these other philosophies, whether they were invented before or after the birth of Christ.

So indifferent to Christ is mere human philosophy in general, we may here observe, that the stream of its theorising has flowed on, from pagan times until now, as though Christ had never been born in Bethlehem. For philosophy in general there is no distinction of time and manner between B.C. and A.D. It ignores this event, just as did the contemporary pagan chroniclers, who, perhaps with more excuse, passed over in silence the life and death of Jesus Christ. Philosophy's proper starting-point is this: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God—and the Word *was* God."¹

Searching for a First Cause, philosophy can find it only here: "All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made."² Christ is the First Cause! "He is before all things!"³ "For in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible. . . .

¹ John i. 1.² *Ibid.* i. 2.³ Col. i. 17.

All things have been created through Him and unto Him, and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”¹ He said it Himself: “The glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”²

Thus, instead of a personal God, thinking, willing, creating, loving, rebuking, saving, and ruling, we are offered by some philosophers a God who, if He did perhaps set the world going, never will intervene in its affairs, a God who is something of a negation, not personal, nor moral, nor beautiful, nor true. We are told that God exists only in our own consciousness, and other theories, discarding the very name of God, offer something with a capital letter, such as Being, Mind, Spirit, Reason, First Cause, Prime Mover, Creative Impulse, Will, Energy, and other words, which leave us no wiser than they found us.

“Metaphysics seem doomed to remain personal guesses at ultimate reality,” says one contemporary philosopher. Coming as they do, out of some man’s inner consciousness, metaphysical systems are obviously without any firm foundation. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”³ A fancy for abstractions is the bane of philosophy. Not that one is without some sympathy with this, because there is an attraction akin to that of other mental (as distinguished from physical) exercises, in the balancing and combining of mere abstractions.

At the world’s present age, the time has come for the dwellers therein to put away childish things,

¹ Col. i. 16, 17.

² John xvii. 5.

³ 1 Cor. iii. 11.

and to take to a philosophy founded in actuality—founded in that divine Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God sensibly manifest in the flesh. Philosophy must adapt itself to fact. How scrupulous our modern philosophers are in their endeavour to keep in harmony with fact as discovered by the Sciences! They are on their guard against what they call "the fatal divorce between science and philosophy." They recognise that "a revolution is taking place in human ideas of physical relations," and they are resolved to keep pace with this revolution, so that their theories may not be out of date because out of accordance with the scientific observation of fact. Yet, as an eminent philosopher has warned us, "Philosophic reflection often lags behind the effective development of knowledge."¹ A foremost modern philosopher² has said :

"The sciences as such are changing and developing, but changing and developing as a single body of doctrine. No one who follows philosophical thought is likely to assert that philosophers are in agreement."

The same thinker adds :

"That is why those who study or teach philosophy spend so much more time, relatively, upon the history of their predecessors than do the teachers of science."

Exactly! Instead of going forward, philosophy

¹ Professor Leon Brunschweig, Professor of Philosophy at the Sorbonne.

² In his inaugural address as President to the British Institute of Philosophical Studies.

has continually gone back upon itself, harking back to its pagan origin. "The march of Science is strewn with the wrecks of abandoned hypotheses," but in the circular march of Philosophy the hypothesis abandoned by one system of Philosophy is pretty sure to be picked up and propped up by another. Plato and Aristotle as metaphysical starting-points and goals have been decidedly inadequate. All honour to those two great minds, but they lived before God was manifest in the flesh. They got no further than the "Idea" or the "Absolute." The truth was what they sought. But, "I am the Truth" had not yet shown Himself in person to the world. What is the use of now asking, like Pilate, "*What is Truth?*" when face to face with Jesus Christ? Why deal in mere abstractions, seeking to inflate them with reality, when the beautiful, the true, the good, are simply the attributes of Jesus Christ? Why content ourselves with the Absolute, or all those other things with a capital letter, when God has shown the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person in His Son? ¹

Because the Greek philosophers put aside the gods of mythology and built up their systems independently thereof, is that a reason why philosophies of the Christian era should leave out of account the Christ of the Bible? We may venture to suppose that Plato and Aristotle would not have thought that they were better guides to philosophy's great goal than the Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles!

¹ Heb. i. 1-3.

"Imitation is the sincerest flattery," and unfortunately the legitimate admiration for Plato and Aristotle has led their successors to flatter these masters to the extent of philosophising as though they, too, lived before Christ Jesus and knew no more of truth as revealed in Him than was known in pagan times.

In the most modern philosophy we no doubt find a break with the classical philosophy upon which succeeding systems have hitherto been more or less of a variation. But the modern tendency, while it may differ in preferring intuition to intellect and impulse to reason, is just as old-fashioned in ignoring (to repeat the quotation which was our point of departure) "the one complete metaphysical system that is usually ignored by metaphysicians, and that is Christianity." Indeed, their ignoring is, if anything, more complete. On the eve of Christ's return, this ignoring, which is nearly two thousand years behind the evidence, might surely cease.

The Nontheism and also the Pantheism to which some philosophers are prone, are denied by the incarnation, and will be doubly denied by the visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ. God will prove His own existence when He again is manifest in His Son at the Second Advent, whatever some may have thought of the impossibility of proving or disproving His existence. Merely abstract conceptions of God must soon, and had better now, give way before the fact that those who see the Son see the Father.

"The inspiring ideal of Philosophy is compre-

hensive truth,"¹ we are authoritatively assured. That is why this appeal is, in all humility and hopefulness, addressed to our philosophers, who have devoted themselves to the high "quest for the ultimately real." If there is "an increasing number of thoughtful people in every walk of life turning wistfully to philosophy for light on some of the problems with which modern civilisation is beset,"² has not the hour come for philosophy to break with paganism, ancient and modern, and face the eternal question, never more timely than now, "What think ye of Christ?"³ Many thoughtful, wistful people, borne down by trials and the fear of worse trials to come, are wondering whether philosophy forbids them to believe in the "love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,"⁴ and whether, as they have read in some philosophic tome, God is unknown and unknowable, or is only a Force, a Mover, an Impulse, or what not, who has nothing in common with "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and is not visible in His Son. And Jesus Himself, as He prepares to return, is asking the philosophers: "Who say ye that I am?"

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!" Is that the answer He shall hear?

Their search for the Absolute, if the right path be taken, leads the philosophers straight to Jesus the Christ. . . . The reign of Relativity brought a certain good *en passant*, but it tends to let thought loose from its moorings and cast it adrift without

¹ *Journal of Philosophical Studies* (Editorial), vol. i. No. 1.

² *Ibid.*

³ Matt. xxii. 42.

⁴ Rom. viii. 39.

chart or compass. We need, in a sense, to be anchored in the Absolute; or, to vary and improve the metaphor, we need, philosophically and every otherwise, to be founded not on sand, but on the Rock. "That Rock is Christ!"¹ "In Him are all the treasures of wisdom."²

Christ is the Absolute, for He is all and "over all,"³ "for He that cometh from above is above all."⁴

To see the Whole, to discover the unity behind and above diversity, is the aim of the philosophers. They may find this in Christ and not elsewhere, for the purpose of God is in the fulness of times to gather together in One all things in Christ.⁵

To know the First Cause is another of Philosophy's concerns. The First Cause is Jesus the Son of God—"In whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."⁶

Oh, Philosophers! are there not among you some new apostles of Jesus Christ, who will redeliver this sublime philosophy to the world?

"I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: and when He is come, He will teach us all things," said the woman at the well. She was

¹ 1 Cor. x. 4.

² Col. ii. 3.

³ Rom. ix. 5.

⁴ John iii. 31.

⁵ Eph. i. 10.

⁶ Col. i. 14-17 (R.V.).

right. "Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He." ¹ When He comes again He will reveal to us all wisdom and truth. Shall philosophy be silent until He comes to speak for Himself? Our philosophers are open-eared for every echo from the laboratories of new scientific doctrine. Will they not also be open-eyed to discern "the signs of the times" that are announcing, with a clarity that cannot be mistaken: "The Lord cometh!"?

¹ John iv. 25, 26.

XXXII

CHRIST'S RETURN IN RELATION TO SCIENCE

IN the so-called conflict between science and religion, between science and the Bible, the victory is with the Bible. Although not specifically a text-book of physical science, its statements are in accordance with physical fact, and have actually anticipated the conclusions of science.

"He hangeth the earth upon nothing," was an admirably popularised account of the truth. And how different from other ancient, but imaginary, accounts of the matter! "The circle of the earth" is an expression that indicates in passing the prophetic knowledge of the earth's sphericity. Some early scientific critics seem to have supposed the Bible to teach that the sun travels round the earth, but it does not so teach, any more than a scientist does when he speaks for convenience of sunrise and sunset. If there were formerly readers of the Bible who supposed the sun to travel round the earth, they were simply *relativists* without knowing it and out of due season, and their error was, after all, less abhorrent to to-day's science than to the science of yesterday.

The New Testament was long before science in its masterly affirmation that Power is the genesis

and the sustenance of matter and the material creation. But, whereas science does not yet know the source of this Power, the Bible does—it is Christ! “All things were made through Him, and without Him was not made anything that hath been made.” He upholds all things by the word of His Power.

The immateriality of matter—the modern scientific doctrine that “matter resolves itself into energy”—was anticipated by the Apostle when he said, “By faith we know that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear”—the visible being made of the invisible.

The account of Creation in Genesis has been a stumbling-block to Science, but it claims reconsideration in the light of the latest thought. This is the Age of Einstein and Rutherford: no longer the Darwinian and Huxleian Age. The doctrine of relativity might do something to illumine for the scientist the time references in Genesis. The constitution of matter, as now understood, was a sealed book to those who initiated the “scientific” objections to biblical statement. It is not so much the Bible, but the whole body of the sciences, and geology and biology in particular, that need review in the light of modern scientific doctrine as to the constitution of matter.

In the light of that doctrine, one mode of creation is as simple and probable as another, and the mode which has been supposed to be intended in the account in Genesis would be as easy to the Creator as any other method or methods which

science has suggested or may yet suggest. It is not likely, when physics and chemistry are advancing so marvellously, that the other sciences will stand still, and they may find as they advance that they come up with the Bible in an unexpected manner.

There are points of agreement already. Science by no means contradicts the picture of the earth waste and void, flooded with water, and later wrapt in cloud, so that the sun and moon were not yet visible. Jupiter, we are told by modern astronomers, is at this time "covered with clouds, so that an observer on that planet would probably be unaware of the existence of bodies outside."

Modern thinkers are beginning to throw off the shackles of nineteenth-century scepticism. One writer on scientific matters¹ has even ventured the observation that the record found in the Hebrew writings of the development of the giant forces of nature is so correct that "it is easy to understand how these writings should have been accepted as having a supernatural origin." The sequence of phenomena as given in Genesis he hails as the true one, saying :

"The Book of Genesis gave us the first authentic record of the Creation which was scientifically correct. In the scriptural record we can follow the Creation through the six periods : first, the formation of the lithosphere ; second, the hydrosphere ; third, separation of land and water and formation of the atmosphere ; fourth, the location

¹ John C. Foley, F.R.G.S., in *Sources of Volcanic Energy* (Putnams).

of the heavenly bodies ; fifth, the creation of fish and fowl ; sixth, the crowning work in the creation of beast and man."

A French savant, M. Louis de Launay, of the *Academie des Sciences*, author of *La Science Géologique* and other works, has remarked upon the conformity which there is between the biblical account of Creation and "*the most recent geological hypotheses*." If the first chapter of the Bible were now to be discovered and read for the very first time, it would doubtless be hailed as a most remarkable ancient document, notably full of scientific truth and light.

Scientists themselves, in their unselfish devotion to truth, do not claim perfection and finality for those theories which the laity sometimes invoke as arguments against the veracity of the Bible. One eminent man of science ¹ writes :

"The genesis of the solar system and the earth-moon system remains unexplained. Whereas Darwin clearly thought that tidal forces cannot have been very important in moulding the solar system, Jeans gives them a very important and, in fact, decisive rôle ; only he adds the hypothesis of an external disturbing star, passing near, in an epoch when stars were more closely packed than at present. One fact emerges clearly. The time for final conclusions in cosmogony has not yet come. The fresh knowledge that crowds in upon us on the observational side, especially from the great telescopes of the Pacific coast, may lead to a new set of solutions of the problems of cosmogony

Astronomical Physics, by F. J. M. Stratton, F.R.A.S., formerly assistant director, Solar Physics Observatory, Cambridge University.

within the next century, which will differ from those offered by present-day writers as widely as their solutions differ from those of Laplace."

From another authoritative source we hear that "the naturalist's path is strewn with unsolved problems as thickly as the woods in autumn." We are informed, too, that "there is very little that science can tell us about the factors which led to the emergence of living organisms, conscious organisms, and human organisms. There is as yet only a little scientific light on these great uplifts. . . ."


The creative intervention of Christ accounts for each of the said "uplifts." These creative interventions were to be followed by redemptive interventions, one of these being now in early prospect. The idea of the creative interventions of Christ is not so startling to the scientific mind, now that it is evident that a continuous outpouring of energy, a continuous sustaining activity, is needed to keep the Creation in being.

The constitution of matter is such that the cessation, or even the momentary intermission, of creative energy would mean the disappearance of all matter. Creative energy not only brought successively into being living organisms, conscious organisms, and human organisms, but also from instant to instant keeps these organisms, with their differentiation in being.

Science seeks the fountain-head of the creative energy which experiment has disclosed. Christ Jesus is the source and fountain of that energy. "An unscientific explanation" would once have

been objected, "Science has, and can have, no cognizance of Christ Jesus." That is not true, now that fulfilled prophecy is giving daily-increasing, experimental evidence that Christ Jesus is, and works, that He can and must be objectively considered and is a scientific fact.

Man as scientist, in his advance toward the central truth of Creation, is advancing toward the creative God-man, Christ Jesus. He is the irreducible, and the ultimate of science. All paths lead to Him, even the path of physical science. The future, even more than the past, interests science. It imports even more to know the end than to know the beginning, the goal than the starting-point. The last chapter of the Bible concerns us still more than the first; the culmination more than the commencement.

The Bible, which claims to be God's written Word, gives only the shortest, most summarised account of Creation, and sweeps forward as though to draw the reader on and away, through the course of time and history, to that grand, future day when His purpose in Creation shall be fulfilled. There is nothing like seeing things as a *whole*! The first words of the Bible can be best understood as we finish reading the last words of the Bible. There is a danger of biblical discussion getting, as it were, waterlogged in the first two chapters of Genesis, and staying there. Thus the unity and the comprehensiveness of the Bible may be overlooked, and, what is more, Christ, who is the principal theme of Old and New Testaments, does not come within the field of a discussion which is limited to

the account of Creation. "Let us go on," is a scriptural maxim to be commended to those who are perplexed by the Bible's first page. From the vantage-point of the last page the first one will seem plainer. From the hill of the Apocalypse, one may look along the road travelled, back to Genesis with a new comprehension.

There is more light to be given. We "know that Messiah cometh,"¹ bodily and visibly, and His coming will be the final, scientific, experimental demonstration of Himself, "for every eye shall see Him,"² and "they shall look upon Him."³ The scientist's noble hunger for truth will then be divinely fed, for "in Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge,"⁴ and "when He is come, He will tell us all things."

¹ John iv. 25.

³ Zech. xii. 10.

² Rev. i. 7.

⁴ Col. ii. 3.

XXXIII

CHRIST'S RETURN IN RELATION TO WORLD-PEACE

NOT since the Armistice has the world-situation been darker and world-peace more precarious than now. Distrust between peoples is at its height; international unrest is rampant. The troubles, political and financial, of some nations increase their vulnerability, and thus put a premium on war. Above all, that prime cause of war—namely, the question of *who shall have the hegemony of the world*—is more acute than it ever has been. While that question remains open, there will be no final Peace. World-hegemony belongs, of course, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and will be assumed by Him when He returns.

Meanwhile, the ambition of the strong is excited by seeing this high throne empty for them to occupy, or already occupied by another whom they would fain replace! The weak tremble lest they be victims of the conflict for world-power.

The supernatural, the satanic, element in war largely accounts for the repeated failure of natural, human plans and machinery for the prevention of war.

Such failure has been conspicuous of late, and this makes one infinitely thankful for the divine

hope and the peace to be established at the Lord's coming.

The Protocol was wrecked at the League of Nations meeting in March 1925, and is already forgotten. Yet highest hope had been placed in it, especially by the smaller nations. The usual optimistic predictions of a new era of Peace had been made at its launching. But rocks ahead were then perceived. Finally, the British Government decided that, despite the good intents and purposes enshrined in the Protocol, it would in practice do more harm than good, and that was the end of it. Though the "tragedy of the Protocol" seemed to many in Europe as great as any such tragedy has seemed, the British Government was, we may be sure, quite right in thinking the Protocol would not work. None of these human peace-plans do work. You cannot keep the fire of war shut up in a paper bag. When it blazes up, it is apt to devour all before it—protocols, pacts, and everything of the sort.

The Locarno Pact was next, and came early in the present year. It was less ambitious than the Protocol, being signed by only seven nations, and of restricted scope, especially as regards Eastern Europe, let alone other continents where obviously war is as much a possibility as farther west. However, it really was signed, and was hailed with joy as "marking the dividing-line between an era of war and an era of peace." The "Locarno Spirit" seemed an expression likely to become classic and an indispensable part of the human vocabulary. The shock of disillusionment came

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very soon afterwards, at the League of Nations meeting in March this year. The only words to fit the case were "The Tragedy of Geneva" and "Locarno is dead." Refuge was sought in delay, and everything deferred until next September. But the question was in every mind, if not on every lip: Could the League of Nations survive this calamity? Was this not its death-blow?

Later there was something of a rally, and it was declared, "Locarno still lives." Many expressions of a contrary opinion were made, especially in Italy, where plain speaking is the practice nowadays. "Illusions are useless," said a prominent Italian newspaper; "Geneva destroys Locarno." "If such things are done in the green leaf, what," asked a London newspaper, "will be done in the dry, when a real international crisis arises between two important powers?"

In June at Geneva things were worse rather than better. Brazil leaves the League. Spain is expected to leave it unless a permanent seat on the Council is obtained. The loss of these nations is a very high price to pay for Germany's entrance to the League, says a Liberal newspaper. Poland may renew her claim to a permanent seat. Germany's final attitude is unknown at this writing. She may cease to object to joining the Council with other new permanent members, or may withdraw her application to enter the League. Humanly speaking, the League prospect for September and after is highly uncertain.

In the light of prophecy, it seems likely that the League of Nations will be transformed into,

or succeeded by, the Roman Imperial grouping of nations.

The *Pax Romana*, which once before prevailed for a time, will be known again. But this Roman Peace, though it come, cannot last any more than it did in ancient days.

There is only one Peace that will last. It is the Peace of God as it shall be established on the earth by Jesus Christ His Son. "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and His name shall be called . . . the Prince of Peace. . . . Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end."¹

"He shall speak peace unto the nations: and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea."²

The Lord Jesus Christ at His coming will not only bring under control the human spirit of belligerency, but He will also put an end to the present real, though unseen, intervention of Satan in human affairs. The Prince of War will be mastered by the Prince of Peace!

The only League of Nations that can succeed is the one that will be made and governed by the returning Christ Jesus. As it is promised:

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in

¹ Isa. ix. 6.

² Zech. ix. 10 (R.V.).

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His paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”¹

War will cease when Christ comes ; until then there will be, as He has expressed it, “ wars and rumours of wars.” But when He comes He will, as human agencies cannot, settle all disputed questions and prevent all international conflicts. “ He will judge between the nations ; and will decide concerning many peoples.”²

Complete disarmament will be secured by Him : “ They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks.”³

Wars will cease. “ Nation shall not lift up sword against nation.”⁴ The very preparation for war will be abolished : “ Neither shall they learn to make war any more.”

¹ Isa. ii. 2, 3.

³ *Ibid.* ii. 4 (R.V.).

² *Ibid.* ii. 4 (R.V.).

⁴ *Ibid.* ii. 4 (R.V.).

XXXIV

CHRIST'S RETURN IN RELATION TO NATURAL CONDITIONS

A MODERN thinker has said that "If there be a divine Spirit of the Universe, Nature, as we know it, cannot possibly be that Spirit's ultimate word to man."

Perfectly true! The disorder of Nature, as we know it, is part of the general chaos which the Lord Jesus Christ will reduce to order when He comes again. Human rebellion against God involves also the Natural Creation. Wars and tumults among mankind have their reflection in "nature red in tooth and claw," in flood, earthquake, and sea and waves roaring. The Apostle tells us that Nature is under the curse "subjected to vanity," as he puts it, and is groaning for the liberation that Christ will bring to her, as to mankind.¹

Nature's derangement is chronic, with periodical crises. There is a strange correspondence between human affairs and natural conditions. Materialists denied this, but the historic fact is rather too strong for them. In this modern world, disturbed as it is internationally, there has been of late noticeable disturbance in nature.

¹ Rom. viii.

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The Bible, of course, declares the close connection between humanity and the earth whereon it dwells, and shows human sin to be related, as cause to effect, to upheavals of Nature.

“The earth also is polluted under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth.”¹

The Flood was the consequence of the violence and corruption that filled the earth at that time, just as the great natural disturbances to occur as this Age runs out will be connected with the culmination of human revolt against the Son of God. The Flood is no longer dismissed as a mere fable. There is too much evidence that a great waste of waters did once prevail. Atlantis, the buried continent, is a good deal discussed, and various conflicting traditions concerning the whereabouts of Atlantis are of interest as showing that the Flood was no mere local catastrophe. The Atlantic, facing the shores of Gibraltar, was the position assigned to it by Plato. Others think that the scene of this Atlantian flood was Mongolia, Persia, Scandinavia, Palestine, the bed of the Mediterranean. Others, again, indicate the Western Atlantic. The simplest conclusion is that all these theories are sound so far as they go, and that all the regions named were covered by the spread of waters.

¹ Isa. xxiv. 5, 6.

As Noah was warned, and his fellows warned through him, so the modern world has been warned.

Christ, Himself, has spoken of the things to come :

“Great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs from heaven. . . . There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, and perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming upon the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”¹

He who truly foretold the siege of Jerusalem—“Ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies”—is to be believed when He foretells natural calamities at the latter end of this Age. He who foretold the destruction of the Temple—“There shall not be left one stone upon another”—and the dispersion of the people and the downtreading of Jerusalem until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, knew what humanity was storing up for itself against the time of general reckoning with all nations, Gentile as well as Jew.

These upheavals are on the way. They presage the coming of the Lord. He has supplied the programme of events. After telling of earthquake, and of storms in sea and earth and sky, He has said :

“Then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in heaven.”²

“And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn,

¹ Luke xxi. 11, 25, 26, 27.

² Matt. xxiv. 30.

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and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”¹

Instead of shaking off the very thought of natural disturbances as symptomatic of disease—namely, the sin of revolt against the Christ of God—it is wiser to face the truth. If revolt against Christ, by disturbing the Cosmos, brings calamity, then devotion to Him operates in the contrary sense. As Nineveh was saved because the people turned to God, so the world could be saved now. It could be spared the approaching tribulation not by “religion” vaguely so-called, not by a self-righteousness which would evade the supreme test of the human heart—namely, its estimate of Christ—but by sheer acceptance of “Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”²

Looking upon the world overhung by the impending storm, it must be with Him, who is the same to-day as yesterday, as it was when He wept over Jerusalem. “If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!” and again, “How often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wing, and you would not.”³

Meanwhile, the first dull rumbling of the storm can be heard. The past year or less has, certainly, been marked by exceptional conditions. Storms at sea have been extraordinarily violent. At the close of one Atlantic voyage, the Captain of the *Berengaria* stated that never in all his thirty-two

¹ Matt. xxiv. 30.

² 1 Cor. i. 30.

³ Luke xix. 41-44, xiii. 34.

years at sea had he experienced such weather. The Master of the *Antinoe*, Captain Tose, it will be remembered, testified at the Board of Trade inquiry that "the weather was the worst I have experienced during my seafaring life." Captain Fried, of the *President Roosevelt*, told of "mountainous seas." The owner's representative referred to "strange Atlantic waves," and said that: "It seemed to him that the weather before the loss of the ship was of a character phenomenally bad."

Widespread floods following torrential rains afflicted many parts of Europe in the autumn; a cyclone in Sicily, weather of violence unknown in living memory; a tidal wave sweeping the coast of Southern Italy; blizzards throughout Europe; snow falling in southern regions where it is usually unknown; a great storm of rain and wind in Spain, cutting off Madrid from communication with the outer world, damaging railway lines; volcanoes in eruption; earthquakes in divers places, not catastrophic, but of wide extent—one described as an "800-mile" earthquake was felt from Sicily to Budapest—while shocks have also been experienced in Germany, in Asia Minor, and elsewhere. Another outstanding natural disturbance occurring lately was the quite exceptional overflow of the river Tigris and the flooding of Bagdad. More recently came the volcanic disaster in Japan, the disastrous cyclone in Burma, the record of a severe earthquake lasting three hours. The New World has shared these trials. Last year occurred the great earthquake at Santa Barbara, felt within a radius of three hundred

miles, with accompanying tidal waves of immense proportions. Severe shocks were felt also in Montana, Utah, and Oregon. Some weeks earlier shocks had occurred in other States. Intense cold, violent storms, and a tidal wave on the Maine Coast have to be mentioned too. Last year also a tidal wave swept the entire southern shore of Lake Ontario, and a sudden and unprecedented change of seven feet occurred in the level of Lake Huron. The director of the seismograph at Fordham University said at the time of the California earthquake that there had been "a most remarkably large number of earthquakes" in the United States during the year, and that all were "closely connected as to their ultimate and fundamental cause." The most serious of all the American signs was the earthquake felt in New York City, serious because it had been by many thought impossible, and also from the obvious nature of the case. The same shock that was felt, happily with no injury, in the City of New York was also widely felt along the Atlantic coast, as far west as Wisconsin and as far south as Louisville and Richmond. Canada experienced it also.

Soon afterward a report on earthquakes in the United States, and "possible means of lessening their effects, was issued by the Engineering-Economics Foundation. It was stated that :

"The research of the Foundation has convinced its officers of the wisdom of their choice of earthquakes as an emergency on which to centre their attention."

"It is proved in a striking manner," according to Professor Knopf, "that the Eastern States are not immune from earth tremors, and those geologists who are saying that New York is absolutely safe from earth tremors are doing a public disservice."

Policies of insurance against earthquake risks, for very large amounts, have been taken out by American firms and by individuals.

The latest natural upheavals include the severe Mediterranean earthquake at the end of June. Every part of Palestine, including Jerusalem, experienced shocks. In Egypt the earthquake was the severest within living memory. In Crete it was of unprecedented violence and length. On the Greek mainland and in Italy the earthquake was felt. It spread also to more distant lands.

The relation between solar activity and earthquakes is being closely studied by scientists, who have observed the coincidence of sunspots and earthquakes. The theory is advanced that the solar disturbances, we know as sunspots, are the exciting cause of corresponding disturbances on earth. One of the eleven-year periods in which such activity moves, a period of unusual intensity, is now advancing toward the maximum.

A garden, as it were, forlorn and unkempt, the earth in this Age shows hints and traces of the beauty unspoiled that it ought to have, and will have, some day. And, like unkempt gardens, it is at the mercy of its foes. "The insects are winning," it is said, in the war of the pests.

What hope is there, even in this, except the

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coming of the Lord of the harvest, to preserve the fruits of the earth ?

All praise to those who are warring against disease ! The medical profession is one of God's good gifts. But there is no real victory possible until the Prince of life and health returns. Epidemics of influenza alone can be more fatal than war, while there are more terrible diseases of mind and body, whose persistence and increase show how harsh and hard the struggle is. " Even so, come, Lord Jesus," is the cry wrung from us, as we realise the sum and burden of all this suffering. . . .

Strange phenomena in the heavens are another of our Lord's predictions. We may look to see these more and more. Even now there is a beginning, suggestive of much greater signs to come. Meteors more impressive than the average have been reported. A display of the Northern Lights much farther south than usual may be noted. These, of course, are mere trifles compared to the stupendous things that will be seen later. " Fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven ! " Well there may be, considering the momentous conflict with celestial as well as earthly powers that will be in progress. For " the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

But, " Then shall appear in heaven *the Sign of the Son of Man* "—the Cross, of course !

On Good Friday, from Canterbury Cathedral, there was broadcast the hymn :

" When I survey the wondrous Cross
On which the Prince of Glory died."

As the choir was singing, listeners in London, as they looked into the sky, saw—they thought they saw—in the east a snow-white cross of cloud.¹ “For a long time,” they say, “the symbol of Christianity hung suspended between heaven and earth, ultimately being absorbed and lost in the thick bank of cloud and haze about the horizon.” Coming, as it did, upon the day set apart in memory of the Saviour’s crucifixion, it had a most solemn and impressive appearance. “What does it mean?” they ask. “Is it a message telling us that a revival of Christianity is needed?” It means, as every sign and portent of this time also means, that the Founder of Christianity is coming back in person to revive it! He is coming to revive His followers, to revive the world, to make live and re-live the knowledge, the love, the worship of Himself.

One day the Son of Man’s own sign will appear with a perfect distinctness in the sky, and after that, all eyes will see the Son of Man Himself coming in His might and His glory.

Then the winds and waves will be calmed; then the desert will blossom as the rose; then the “struggle for existence” and the “survival of the fittest” will give place to concord. Then, “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.”² Then, “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.” Then, “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain.” Disease will be banished, for “there shall be no more thence an infant of days,

¹ Signed letter in *The Daily Express*.

² Isa. lv. 13.

nor an old man that hath not filled his days." Then, "There shall be no more the voice of weeping and the voice of crying." ¹

"Oh let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for Thou shalt govern the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let all the people praise Thee, O God. . . . Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us." ²

¹ Isa. lxx. 19 (R.V.).

² Ps. lxxvii. 4, 5, 6.

XXXV

CHRIST'S RETURN IN RELATION TO THE MORAL ISSUE

ADMITTEDLY, the Lord's First Advent and the founding of Christianity came when greatly needed from the moral point of view. Prophecy shows that there will be a corresponding need existing and increasing as the Second Advent draws nearer. Neo-Paganism in belief will tend towards neo-pagan conduct on the part of those disposed in that direction. Already, Christian morality is being subjected to criticism that would not have found voice some time ago. Instead of self-control, the talk is often of inhibitions deemed needless, if not harmful. In a word, there is unrest in this as in all other spheres. That is among the most compelling of reasons for the Second Advent.

The purity of the Lord Jesus in His human life is one among His many beautiful traits. The whole tone of His mind was, in this regard, ideal. Not only the things He thought and said, but the things He did not think and did not say! Sanity, normality, and purity sum up His attitude toward the facts of life. He brought a current of health and strength and goodness into the corruption of the time. Imagine, then, His purity intro-

duced by His royal, divine power into the life of the whole world! It will be the chief glory of the Millennial Age. In the field of morals, satanic influence is remarkably potent, and satanic activity can be suppressed only by the returning Christ. The bringing of the human heart into obedience to Christ through the promised future and irresistible outpouring of His Spirit upon all flesh is needed too.

The moral difficulty has done mortal injury to one human civilisation after another: no one denies it. If history repeats itself in anything, it repeats itself in that. The volumes that could be written upon this theme! The purity of Christ when He comes victoriously to inspire the world therewith, provides the only way of ending the perennial trouble.

There are people who think that some modern philosophical teachings react unfavourably, however undesignedly so, upon moral conditions. The lament is heard that Reason, which some have sought to enthrone instead of the God of the Bible, is now deposed in turn by mere Instinct. The exaltation of instinct and impulse above intellect and reason, however free from practical ill effect while it remains a matter of academic speculation within the four walls of the professorial study, is likely, if it gets outside these limits, to act as unfavourably upon the moral health of the community as certain bacteria escaped from the test-tube would act upon the community's physical health. We are getting nearest to the fact of the matter by saying that, unless there is belief in a

Personal God, folk know no single, authoritative standard, and each feels free to select some standard of his own. A chaotic result follows. Experiments in a supposed "new morality" are perhaps tried, and as there is nothing new under the sun in such matters, the old disaster is only too often the result, especially for the women.

Responsible and well-informed persons are already expressing deep concern as to the moral dangers now present, and they protest that even young children are being subjected to the demoralising influences of the time. As to those of older growth, it has been said by one whose task is to watch over such matters, "I am afraid the public taste is not very high." In fact, the hankering after the knowledge of evil is present in the modern world as it was in the Garden of Eden!

Moral unrest is seen reflected in much current literature. The reviewer of one modern novel commends it as a most "excellent satire upon the modern tendency towards pagan morals and unbridled natural instincts."

"I certainly agree with many observers," said the Prime Minister a few months ago, "that, since the war, the manifest forces of Satan have been more conspicuously at large." Some maintain that it is war which produces and leaves behind it moral evils. But is not the truth rather this—that these evils and war have the same origin, and flourish together, the one not being the cause of the other, but both being effects of a common cause? In the same address on Religion and Politics by the

Prime Minister, from which a sentence has been quoted, he also said :

“Many people, I fear, to-day fail to realise the very critical character of the period through which the world is passing. To-day the world seems more irreligious than it has ever been in the Christian era. Irresponsible pleasure-seeking and prodigal luxury abound ; churchgoing has lost the hold it had in our childhood ; and candidates for the Ministry are less in numbers than in years past.”

It must be added that the Prime Minister further maintained that “the very manifestation of these forces of Satan is calling other forces into the field,” and that, while superficially this changed world in which we are living is a “frivolous world full of jazzing and preoccupation with pleasure, yet under the surface it is intensely serious.”

That is very true. And among those who seem most exclusively pleasure-bent, not to say jazz-crazed, there are doubtless many who, stricken by despair of the world as it is, with its ultimate sorrow and tragedy, seek relief in excitement at any price. Some kind of oblivion is the best thing they know how to seek, if they have not faith in Him who is already offering rest to the weary and heavy-laden, and has promised to come again to crown His work of rescue. Because they have not a future, overwhelming joy to count upon, and because in the meantime they have not the Cross at which to kneel and get rid of sin, against which to lean their head, that contact with its rough wood may draw the venom

from every wound—they try to make do with “eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow . . . !”

This is a time of extreme temptation to the young folk. For the plenitude of temptation and absence of protection, they, it is obvious, are not alone responsible. The memory of the past war and the menace of the next, the general upheaval of conditions and effacement of landmarks, is confusing and confounding to the last degree to those who are newly entering upon life. Youth is naturally forward-looking, and the present generation more so than any other. It demands a Gospel of and for the future. We have one to give. It is the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ—the good news that the Crucified One who was dead is alive, and is soon coming back crowned. Jesus is the only hope that can be offered to the young men and young women of this troublous Age, now nearing its close. Not Jesus, the very good man, but only man, of whom so much is said in books and lectures nowadays, but Jesus who is God manifest in the flesh. That vague, shadowy, imaginary being, the merely human Jesus who lived and died about two thousand years ago, would be sadly insufficient to help twentieth-century youth, faced by its own modern and complex problems. The Jesus whom youth needs is Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—Jesus, the God and Saviour and Lord, who is now, and ever shall be.

Serious-minded youth is interested in social questions and public affairs, “in the side of Christianity, which,” as it has been said, “takes into

view all kinds of activities for the social betterment of the people." That is an excellent thing, but it is not enough. In passing we should notice that the condition of the masses, materially speaking, is likely to improve, beyond any need of altruistic effort to improve it. The masses are politically enfranchised and industrially powerful, and a powerful class, when it has learnt to make intelligent and constructive use of its power, does not fail to provide for its own creature comforts. If they display a modicum of common sense, nothing can prevent the prosperity and the positive enrichment of the mass of the people, save a break-up of society, due to war or other calamity. Even under dictatorship, the same mass-prosperity is likely to be achieved, for it is all to the interest and satisfaction of a wise dictator to make the masses prosperous and therefore content with his rule. Science is leading industrial organisers and workers forward to the conquest of wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. On this subject Professor Soddy¹ says :

"Above us still rises indefinitely the ascent to physical power, far beyond the dreams of mortals in any previous system of philosophy. These possibilities of a newer order of things, of a more exalted material destiny than any other which have been foretold, are not the promise of another world. They exist in this . . . an entirely new prospect has been opened up. The real wealth of the world is its energy, and by these discoveries of (physical science) it for the first time transpires that the hard struggle for existence on the bare

¹ *The Interpretation of Radium and the Structure of the Atom.*

leavings of natural energy, in which the race has evolved, is no longer the only possible and enduring lot of Man."

If the new sources of energy, made available through experimental science, are utilised, there will be abundant prosperity for all. "Social reform" will then be no more needful for the masses than it now is for the classes! The social problem in its narrower, material aspect will be solved. But—and it is a very big "but"—the same scientist reminds us, the blessings hitherto conferred upon mankind by science have too often been converted into a curse, and that which should have tended to better life has been used to inflict suffering and death. Moreover, wealth has its moral dangers for the many as for the few. The very vastness of wealth enjoyed by the peoples of the earth may be so abused as to exemplify in this sense the truth of the words :

"Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay."

The real social problem is not primarily one of poverty or of riches. It has nothing to do with classes and class movements, for there is a sameness in human nature which is not affected by anything so artificial and temporary as distinction of class.

The real social problem will persist, though poverty be abolished and class distinctions disappear, because it is a moral problem. In the last days of the Age, says the Apostle, "grievous times shall come, for men shall be unholy, without

self-control, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.”¹ As the climax approaches, these evils will develop where some are concerned, while others intent upon the return of the Saviour will more and more “set their mind upon the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.”²

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 1-4 (R.V.).

² Col. iii. 1 (R.V.).

XXXVI

CHRIST'S RETURN IN RELATION TO THE INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

IN the new Millennial Age the history of this Age will probably pass away almost as completely as the history of mankind before the Flood. Only its main outlines and its lesson are likely to be kept in mind, while its detailed records disappear. Looking back from the Millennial Age, the panorama of past history will be seen to be the Cross of Christ, "towering o'er the wrecks of time." The sweep of history has been onward to His Cross and again onward to His Kingdom.

Such is at once the real philosophy of history, and the true optimism. If we reject it, we are thrown back upon theories of false optimism repeatedly contradicted by experience, or upon theories of unmitigated pessimism. The optimistic theories include this—that human history is the expression of the idea of freedom. One sage has said: "The history of the world is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom." This theory has received a severe blow from certain events and developments in this modern world which would have astonished past thinkers beyond measure, although it is several years since Professor Flint, in his *Philosophy of History*, wrote that

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“political thought oscillates between two poles—between despotism and anarchy.”

So much, then, for history as the increasing expression of the idea of freedom! Although when history, as mankind makes it, comes to an end, the world will be ruled by Christ, “whose service is perfect freedom.”

So with the idea of progress. The biggest war ever known is just behind us, and another, that will be worse by far, is now suspended over us by a mere thread. Is this progress? There is but one sure line of progress traceable through history, and that is the progress represented by God's carrying out of His purpose to bring in everlasting righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord. We see that progress in the setting apart of a people of whom should be born a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. We see it in His Incarnation, in His sacrificial Death, as of “a corn of wheat which, unless it sink into the earth and die, abideth alone.”¹ We see it in His glorious Resurrection, which is the pledge and pathway to eternal life of those for whom He died; we see it in His Ascension; and we see this progress nearing the climax of His Return, as the darkness thickening over the world witnesses that the sunrise is near.

Another optimistic theory which has now to be abandoned is that of historical evolution towards something named the Ideal. This is simply not what happens. The natural history of human society ends with death.

Far from making an ever-upward, evolutionary

¹ John xii. 24.

progress, civilisations are observed, after reaching their maximum, to go through a period of decline which precedes downfall. During this period they are a prey to inward ills and outward foes. Then comes death, followed by a burial, lasting until the spade, by accident or design, uncovers these remains to the curious, half-careless gaze of a much later time. "Yes, but upon the ruins of one dead civilisation another greater one will arise," some may venture. Unfortunately, no! Archæologists have found civilisations buried three deep, of which the oldest and farthest down has left evidence of being more advanced than those above, and the most recent and nearest the surface appears the most "primitive" of the three! The civilised people of long-past time appear to have had knowledge, to have made discoveries that died with their civilisation and may not even yet have been recaptured; such is a conjecture we hear nowadays. This idea that a later civilisation is necessarily the highest, because earlier ones have risen, declined, and fallen, even if supported by facts, as it is not, is something very different from that gradual, continuous advance demanded by an evolutionary interpretation of history. The theory of the evolutionary progress of human society is contradicted by the vicious circular movement of history.

It is but too plainly due, this vicious circling, to an inherent flaw in the constituent material of human civilisation—to an inherent flaw in the human nature of the human beings concerned.

"Well, at least some new race can build a great

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civilisation to replace the one that has fallen," is the optimist's response. But what new race is left to trace the next circle—to loop, as it were, the next civilisationary loop? There is anticipation in some quarters of the future development of a new race or races. But races older than those now on earth lie beneath the ocean, we are told, which is a warning against expecting too much of races still to be developed. Besides, a new race, if such should arise, would have its source in races of to-day, and human nature, like water, does not rise higher than its source. It must be raised, if it is to rise—raised by Him who came down from heaven that He might do this.

With only human prescience to guide us for the moment, let us look forward to the final working of that law of decline and fall whose operation is exhibited in the case of ancient civilisations! Suppose European Civilisation to fall, what race will build the next Civilisation? Not the people of the New World. Their civilisation is part and parcel of our own, with variations not wholly making for rejuvenescence or even a prolonged senescence.

If Western Civilisation in the Old World is subject to internal weakness or external perils, it is so in the New World too. Must not the next civilisation arise, therefore, in the East? But that means returning to the historic starting-point! The vicious circle of vicious circles being complete, the same weary round begins again! The East has given the most conspicuous examples of the decline and death of civilisations. A drear prospect,

then, if all that history has in store is a turn of the scales, a return to oriental preponderance ! •

Auguries of racial strife—or of a decadence of the white nations, ending in the submergence of Western Civilisation—are heard in these days.

It is as a means of holding a due balance between Occident and Orient—of preventing sheer numbers from outweighing the Western Peoples—that many will support the revival of the Roman territorial and imperial unity, with its attendant power and prestige. But whatever confederacy the nations might make, even though it included not some nations only, but every nation, Eastern and Western, on the face of the earth—the flaw in human nature that works ruin would be there. This fact is finding its way into philosophical reckoning. In his *Crépuscule des Nations Blanches*, M. Muret, an outstanding figure among Swiss thinkers, says :

“Certain of our philosophers, in the light of the latest events, read our horoscopes in our stars which are declining on the horizon of history. There is nothing to rejoice us in their prognostications. The German philosopher, Oswald Spengler, has conquered a prompt celebrity by deducing from the marasma of our time a theory of decadence which is, moreover, not without grandeur. Oswald Spengler claims to have discovered the morphology of history, that is to say, the immutable order in which have succeeded each other since the dawn of known time, the infancy of a civilisation, its youth, its maturity, its old age, and its death. Reasoning by analogy, Oswald Spengler makes bold to predict to us our future, or what remains of

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it. How troubled, bloody, and frail it is! We shall not even die in beauty like the heroine of a Scandinavian drama. Terribly murderous civil wars, implacable revolutions, periods of fierce dictatorship of the proletariat, interrupted by Cæsarean reactions, not less fierce, will alternate during a period of two hundred years, after which will come death. Spengler's book is a bold essay in scientific prophecy."

Without endorsing this forecast, which he thinks, or at least hopes, may be too darkly coloured, M. Muret, on his own account, says :

"Without doubt we should act with wisdom and precaution by accustoming ourselves to this idea that we must face the decline which is descending upon us."

Is it not time for Christ to come? There is no other hope by which to live meanwhile.

"The Old Testament representations of God, of His relations to man, of His actings in history, of His teachings as to human unity, moral retribution, future redemption, and a *Messianic Kingdom*, have often," says the author of *The Philosophy of History*,¹ "been accepted and exhibited as the explanation of universal history."

Certainly it is the true explanation—it is the true Philosophy of History.

¹ Professor Robert Flint.

CONCLUSION

IN the foregoing pages we have taken up a challenge, thrown down in a recent work of philosophy, "to try to deal seriously with the colossal problem presented by the history of mankind."

"To what end," cries the same writer, "is this long martyrdom not only preponderantly painful, but in large part offensive, squalid, and foul?" This, says he, is the question "now being asked in so many quarters, and an answer, not wholly unsatisfactory, will in the long run have to be made."

From no human source can the answer be obtained. History, philosophy, and politics are dumb in presence of this mighty challenge. Can science help here? As we have seen in preceding chapters, modern physical science casts most valuable side-lights upon our theme, and it is easy to comply with the requirement stated by a writer who says, "In modern times religion should include an interpretation of the results of science." But, as an eminent scientist has lately admitted, "there are large questions concerning human destiny upon which science sheds no light." The Bible alone provides the desired answer, and promises, as the solution of the problem stated, the return and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A new era, the final era of world-history, is to open when He comes. With the promise and progress of that Millennial Era the prophecies of the Bible are chiefly concerned. Its religious and political conditions are described. Economic plenty will be assured as none of our present movements and political parties can assure it. World-peace and social harmony will not fail under the sway of the Prince of Peace. Religious unbelief will be impossible when God is manifest. Religion will then be a personal experience, but not in the sense intended by those who now feel that personal experience may justify beliefs as many and various as the individuals that entertain them. When they see the Lord Jesus as He reappears to the world, everybody's religious experience will be one and the same, and consequently their religion will be the same. Then, when they see Him, they will say with one voice :

“O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.”¹

The ideal political government will prevail.

Democracy has been defined as “voluntary participation in the common tasks.” “Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power,”² says the Psalmist in Messianic prediction. The willing acceptance by the peoples of the earth of the rule of the Lord Jesus—this will be a glorious democracy without defect. Representative

¹ Ps. xcv. 6.

² *Ibid.* cx. 3.

government—what better “representative” can the nations have to govern them than the God-man who loved the world before the world loved Him, who knew human need before humanity knew it?

After the succession of human kings, presidents, ministers, dictators, leaders, and the rest, after governmental errors and failures, the reign of the Son of God will indeed be what is promised:

“He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.”¹

The perfect wisdom, power, and righteousness, without which government fails, this heavenly King and no one else possesses. No wonder, then, that the politically minded are increasingly interested in “the signs of the times,” which speak of His coming.

“The Kingdom is the Lord’s: and He is the governor among the nations.”²

The Millennium will be the last and best chapter in the history of this old earth. At its close, every vestige and root of sin, and the very thought and possibility of sin, will be done away, and there will be the new heaven and the new earth.

The new Geology teaches the liability of this Earth to a cataclysmic end, notably through increasing internal heat due to radio-activity.

¹ 2 Sam. xxiii. 4.

² Ps. xxii. 28.

This in turn would in scientific probability involve a larger cataclysm. But prophecy informs us that God's Creation and His people will survive and persist and be carried over from old to new, and a grander order will follow, to be even more completely His Kingdom and the scene of His righteousness than this former earth and heaven can possibly be.

That mighty regeneration of the still far future is to be distinguished from the Messianic return of the Lord Jesus and His millennial reign, to which this book is devoted. It is after the still far end of the soon-to-begin Messianic Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, that the Apostle foresees a "new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." But Jesus still is the Lamb, and with the Father is "the Temple thereof," and the throne is "the throne of God and of the Lamb."

And the City has no need of the Sun to shine in it—"For the Lamb is the Light thereof!"

Yes; there can be Light before Sun and after the Sun and without the Sun, and when all things have been made new, the true Light will shine.

The Creation now is in the dark. But for the sun, moon, and stars, the Creation would be in darkness just as a street in the night-time if the lamps were not lit. The present darkness of the Creation must be wrong, and is part of the great curse following upon sin. When God, as related in Genesis, restored the Earth made waste and void

after some far-away catastrophe. His first word was, "Let there be Light!" When God was manifest in the flesh it was to a world "walking in darkness" that He came as "the Light of the world." When soon He comes again, to begin the Millennium, Light will shine brighter and wider. At the last great re-creation, the command, "Let there be Light," will go forth, and the regenerate Creation will be filled with sunshine, for the Light thereof will be the Lamb. . . .

This is a Dispensation of Faith, but the new Dispensation of Sight is about to begin. In these days our eyes are to be fixed upon that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We have already reached the stage when faith is merging in sight. Since the Lord's Ascension it has been a matter of walking by faith, but now we begin almost to walk by sight. We are near the meeting-point of night and day. Promise is almost performance. The Daystar, already risen in our hearts, is soon to shine in the sky. The Sun of Righteousness is not yet to be seen, but there is, for the eyes that God has opened, a real fore-light of dawn. Hope is becoming better than hope—is becoming that which is seen—"For who hopeth for that which he seeth?"¹

This is what "the signs of the times" mean to many, and should mean to all. As the returning Lord bade us, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."²

¹ Rom. viii. 24 (R.V.).

² Luke xxi. 28.

That great day is near when, at His appearing, and to the supreme joy of His followers :

“At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father !”¹

The sublime prospect ! The Church is with the Lord who is coming again, that where He is, His Church may be also ! The earth, liberated from the Evil One, is become a place of righteousness, of peace, of happiness, and knows the “times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord” ! Far more and better than all, the Lord Jesus will at last be universally known, acknowledged, worshipped !

The moment has surely come for all those who long for this to declare it by testimony and implore it by the prayer : “Even so, come, Lord Jesus !”

¹ Phil. ii. 10, 11.